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Fightin' for Fritz
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NEA Today

NOVEMBER 1984

A NEWSPAPER FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

VOL. 3, NO. 2

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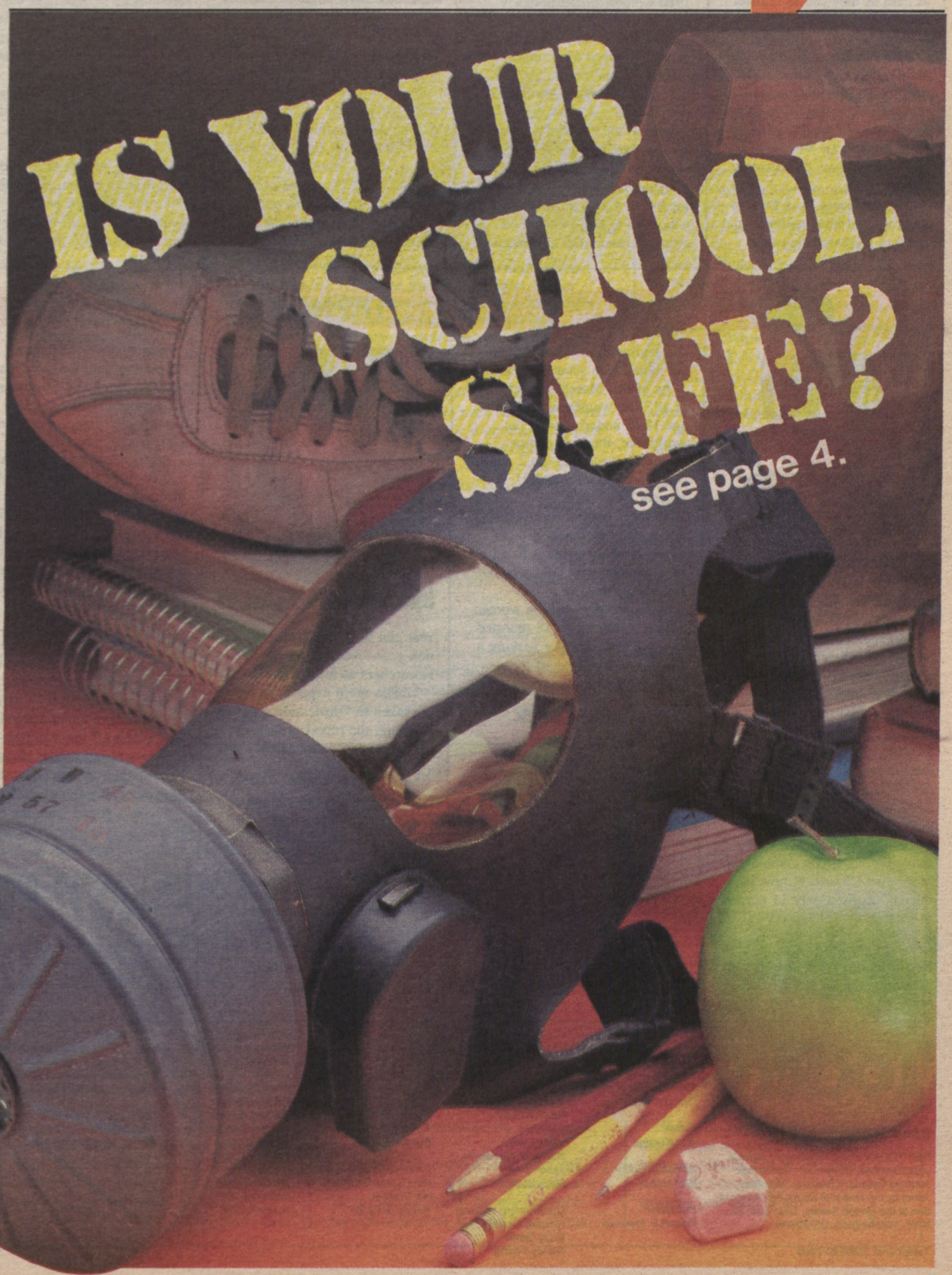


PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

A Thoughtful Vote

Something exciting is happening in the United States this fall. Americans—by the millions—are registering to vote.

Our nation began the year with close to 60 million potential voters unregistered. By Election Day '84, that number will be down considerably.

Much of the credit for this historic turnaround has to go to NEA members all around the country who have been working as hard as they can to register new voters.

NEA, in fact, has been an active supporter of five major national and regional voter registration projects. I'm particularly proud of the Women's Vote Project, an NEA-backed coalition of some 65 national organizations.

The Women's Vote Project has captured imaginations—and sparked increased registrations—with a simple yet powerful slogan: *It's a man's world—unless women vote!*

Historically, women have not registered to vote in the numbers they should. Neither have low-income Americans or members of minority groups or working, middle-class Americans in general. In 1980, in fact, less than 54 percent of the nation's potential voters cast a ballot.

The people who did vote in 1980 were disproportionately upper-income Americans. They elected an Administration that carefully looked after upper-income voters' needs.

Now we need an Administration for the rest of us, an Administration that cares about poor children's right to a quality education, an Administration that understands how hard it is for those of us who work in education to make ends meet, an Administration that's committed

Joe Di Dio

NEA President
Mary Hatwood Futrell

to giving schools the resources they need.

We can have that Administration if we vote on November 6—and do everything we can to see to it that our family, friends, and neighbors vote, too.

But I think that those of us who teach and work in our nation's schools, colleges, and universities have a special responsibility that goes beyond urging people to vote. It's up to us, as educators, to urge people to *think* before they vote.

An unthinking vote, after all, may be a wasted vote.

Democracy works only if people take it seriously, and taking it seriously means comparing candidates for office on the issues of the day, not the quip of the moment.

This is a lesson that every social studies teacher teaches. But it's a lesson that all of us—not just civics teachers—need to take to heart. Candidates who ignore issues, who dodge questions about their future policy plans, who smother us instead in Madison Avenue television homilies are insulting our ideal of an educated, thinking, and caring citizenry.

I believe we are at a critical juncture as a nation, especially in education. With far-sighted national leadership, we have a *real* opportunity to make educational history over the next several years. The American people, by all indications, want excellence in our schools—and they're willing to foot the bill for it, if that bill is clearly presented and explained.

An opportunity like the one before us today comes only once in a professional lifetime. We need to make the most of it. We need national leadership that can spell out a concrete plan for educational progress.

Let me emphasize one final point. People, not public opinion polls, elect Presidents and members of Congress. On November 6, when we cast our ballots in the only poll that counts, let's vote for candidates who respect our right to know where they stand on the issues and what they will do once elected.

We demand the highest standards for our schools. Let's demand standards equally as rigorous for our nation's political life.

TRENDS

Micro Impact: Macro

The micro invasion continues, and in the last year it's been positively relentless.

Market Data Retrieval, Inc. (MDR), which surveys schools annually, reports that the total number of microcomputers in the nation's public schools now exceeds 550,000—a 70 percent increase over last year. The metal minds have become virtually omnipresent in high schools, MDR found: 95 percent have at least one.

Elementary schools—after a sputtering start—are catching up. More than 82 percent now have micros, up from only 11 percent as recently as 1981.

See You at 5

Record numbers of women continue to enter the labor force, and a growing number of them are moms with school-age kids.

As of this March, 61 percent of all U.S. women with children age 18 or under were in the workforce, the U.S. Labor Department reports—up 2 percent from last year and 21 percent from 1970.

Mothers with children under age 3 made up much of this year's increase. Almost half these women now hold jobs outside the home.

A record 19.5 million women with children under 18 reported they were working or seeking a job. Some 8 million of them have children under age 6.

Meanwhile, Back On Planet Earth...

While the Reagan Administration was voicing visions of launching a teacher into space, the Rand Corporation recently offered some down-to-earth perspectives on teaching.

In its report on "The Coming Crisis in Teaching," the California think-tank warned that the profession will fail to attract any but the "least academically able" newcomers unless status *and pay* are upgraded. The current glut of quick fixes and election-year "reform" struck Rand researchers as insufficient.

Unless more expensive steps are taken to "professionalize" teaching, the report predicts a severe teacher shortage by 1988.

What Price the Basics?

High school programs in the fine arts and other subjects are beginning to suffer because of increased emphasis on the so-called basics.

Virginia's ninth graders must now earn 20 credits to graduate—compared to 18 a year ago. And the added units must be in specific basic courses, thereby limiting elective options.

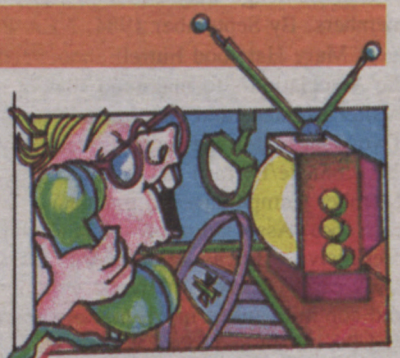
For schools in Arlington, Alexandria, and Fairfax County, Va., the decreased enrollments in "nonbasic" subjects have meant many program cuts and some teacher layoffs.

An equally uncertain situation exists in San Diego, Calif. Although high schools there still require one-and-a-half fine arts credits for graduation, the San Diego Teachers Association reports that for most students "the minimum now tends to become a maximum."

Portatronics

Chalk up another milestone in the ever-awesome electronic revolution. With today's array of "personal communication technologies," you can transcend the tawdry trivia of your surroundings to tune into groovier goings-on elsewhere.

Phone a friend from the comfort of your car, or sneak a peek at the soaps on the miniaturized TV set under the desk in your office. But will the trend toward portable (and, increasingly, *wearable)* media really make us that much better off?



"On the contrary," argues *Washington Post* reporter Michael Schrage. While researching the question, he was almost hit by a driver talking on a car phone.

The Inside Story

The latest Gallup poll of public school teachers finds 72 percent would give their own schools an A or B grade. Some 90 percent believe they're underpaid.

Other polls have revealed that the public thinks *lack of discipline* and *use of drugs* are the schools' top problems.

Teachers, however, put *parents' lack of interest/support* first, followed by *lack of proper financial support* and *pupils' disinterest.* Only 5 percent mentioned *use of drugs.*

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CAMPAIGN NOTES

Diana Walker/Gamma Liaison

Members Rally Behind Mondale/Ferraro

Lynne Sladky

Lynne Sladky

Jean-Rae Turner

Left: Helping out with Ohio's member-to-member canvass are Ravenna Education Association members Beatrice VanAtta (left) and Becky Clemente. Upper right: Len Codispoti (left) discusses campaign strategy with Cuyahoga Falls Education Association colleagues Bill Emmitt (center) and John Perkins (right). Lower right: New Jersey's Essex County Education Association volunteers Laverne Cooper (left) and Sally Tallmadge polish off a campaign mailing.

One blustery day last winter in Keene, N.H., Walter (Fritz) Mondale took out a few moments from the grueling primary campaign to discuss with a handful of Association members their role in the 1984 Presidential election.

Teachers now play a critical role in Presidential campaigns, Mondale noted, because they have the skills to be politically effective.

"You can be disproportionately influential—if you'll use your influence," Mondale stressed.

That challenge wasn't lost on NEA members. By September 1984, NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell announced the Association's formal endorsement of Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro. Two weeks later she set forth details of the Mondale/Ferraro '84 Member-to-Member Campaign—and mailed each local Association president a comprehensive political action how-to kit.

By early October, the resourcefulness and commitment of individual members and their state and local Associations were readily apparent. Here are some glimpses of that grassroots activism at work in several states:

"Political involvement gets my adrenaline going," claims Association activist Pati Gant, a government, history, and English teacher at Lewis & Clark High School in Spokane, Wash.

She values campaign work for its people-to-people involvement. Gant put her personal skills to good use co-hosting an October 7 Mondale/Ferraro fundraiser for 60 school employees and helping to supervise her Association's phone bank.

Believing her colleagues may be influenced by her convictions, she wears a Mondale/Ferraro pin to school each day.

"When people ask me why I wear it, I remind them what Reagan's meant to our schools and children," Gant says.

After leaders of Florida's Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association (PCTA) committed themselves to surveying all 4,000 of their members to determine candidate preferences, they set a goal of reaching 300 to 400 teachers a night.

"Then we stood back for a minute and wondered where we'd get the volunteers to do this massive job," recalls fifth grade teacher Don Anders, chair of the local's political action committee.

But true to form, volunteers came forth, and PCTA's eight phone lines got a good workout for several weeks. The data the volunteers gathered served as an invaluable guide to later campaign work.

Ann Graham's American history and world geography students at Northwest High School in Jackson County, Mich., may have temporarily lost a teacher—but the Mondale campaign gained a seasoned campaign volunteer.

Joe Di Dio

On full-time release to serve as the Michigan Education Association's Mondale/Ferraro campaign coordinator, Graham helped spearhead a series of nine regional meetings to enlist local Association leaders in the campaigns of pro-education candidates.

Local leaders then returned to their schools to discuss why Mondale and Ferraro and other Association-backed candidates deserve support.

"The issues this year demanded face-to-face meetings," notes Graham. "So we're taking our message into every school building in the state."

When retired San Jose, Calif., English teacher Shirley McCarthy says she's a fulltime volunteer for the Mondale campaign, she means *fulltime*.

"When I volunteer for work on a campaign," she explains, "I usually work from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week."

McCarthy, formerly legislative chair of the San Jose Teachers Association, is doing a bit of everything, campaign-wise, from walking precincts for Mondale to writing letters to the editor.

"I consider it absolutely vital to be involved this year," McCarthy says. "When I think about what the Reagan Administration has meant for the environment, education, the disadvantaged, and women's rights, I just can't stand back."

—Vicky Lytle

EDUCATING FRITZ

Mondale's 5th Grade Teacher Remembers the Way It Was

When Fritz Mondale was in fifth grade in Elmore, Minn., his penmanship was so poor that his teacher, Millie Millner, asked him to redo an assignment to make it more legible.

"Someday," Mondale sighed, "I'm going to have a secretary to retype my work."

But it wasn't just his formless scrawl that etched itself in Millner's memory. "He always had a big grin on his face," recalls Millner, "and he was constantly helping people."

There was the time one winter when young Fritz, having befriended the sons of a Russian immigrant family, approached Millner. "Did you know that the Riefers don't have any coal?" he whispered. Millner put out the word, and by nightfall the Riefers had coal.

At the start of the year, Fritz found out that his teacher was recovering from an appendectomy. He assembled a group of his friends to take turns transporting her books back and forth to the library in their little red wagon.

After retiring in 1967, Millner always wondered whether her increasingly famous former student would remember her. It wasn't until 1980, when the Vice-President scheduled a trip near her Pocatello, Idaho, home that she proposed a reunion. He accepted warmly.

Milan Churnovich, *Idaho Statesman*

Retired teacher Millie Millner and one of her favorite students get reacquainted as her husband records the event.

As they talked about those long-ago school days, the Vice-President looked his former teacher in the eye and told her how important she had been to him.

"And you know what he remembered about my class?" recounts Millner. "He said he would always remember I had taught him 'You can be anything you want to be.'"

—V.L.

EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS . . .

YOUR SCHOOL MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO THE HEALTH OF STAFF AND STUDENTS ALIKE.

Maybe you think you're safe—that occupational exposure to toxic hazards is limited to places like steel mills, petroleum refineries, and chemical plants.

Schools, after all, are where children learn. No manufacturing takes place; there are no dangerous chemicals, no poisonous emissions. Schools are "safe."

Ten years ago few would have disputed that comfortable assumption. The absence of noxious fumes and billowing smokestacks provided a sense of security. No longer. We now recognize that unseen toxic hazards inhabit our schools.

Asbestos provided the first warning of toxic danger. For more than three decades, asbestos was the material of choice for fireproofing, soundproofing, and insulation in schools. Then scientists and public officials began to worry. A proven—and potent—cancer-causing agent, asbestos is virtually indestructible. But the materials that bind it together are not. These materials can become friable (easily crumbled) and release asbestos fibers into the air.

Slowly the recognition grew that asbestos is a time bomb ticking away in our nation's schools. In 1980 Congress passed legislation requiring school districts to inspect all buildings and notify parents and employees if friable asbestos was found. But the government does not require friable asbestos to be either sealed off or removed.

Last August, Congress passed the School Hazard Abatement Act of 1984, authorizing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to spend up to $600 million over the next seven years on grants and loans to school districts for asbestos removal. Initially the EPA told Congress it would not use the funds but would leave the cost of asbestos cleanup—estimated at one to two billion dollars nationwide—to local districts. After pressure by NEA and other concerned groups, the Reagan EPA reversed itself, announcing last month that the funds would be used.

The EPA estimates that 15 million children and 1.4 million employees study and work in schools containing friable asbestos.

Asbestos is only the tip of the toxic iceberg. The potential health hazards in schools are many, and students as well as school employees are potentially at risk. Teachers, custodians, clerical workers, paraprofessionals, mechanics, and administrators—no school employee is immune from occupational health hazards.

Toxic hazards can be found in art rooms, science labs, and vocational shops. Most duplicating fluids contain methanol, a powerful solvent that can cause serious health damage. There are toxic ingredients in many of the cleaning solvents and pesticides used in schools. Even the sites on which schools are built and the air that circulates through them can pose health dangers.

Some hazards, like asbestos, take considerable detective work and expertise to track down—and a lot of money to correct. Others are more easily identified and removed. They are dangers that—with awareness, some work, and cooperation—employees and parents can eliminate.

Art classrooms may be the most dangerous rooms in school. A major reason for the danger is lack of awareness that many art materials—including those designed for young children—contain substances that can cause cancer or damage to the reproductive, nervous, and respiratory systems, the heart, and other vital organs.

"Art materials aren't adequately labeled," explains Lou Spelich, an NEA-New York member in Albany who has taught art for 30 years. "We have to find the hazards," he adds, "because children—and especially teachers—are at risk."

From paints and magic markers to glues, clays, glazes, and silkscreen inks—the list of art materials containing ingredients that can cause long-term, serious health damage is astounding. As with any toxic substance, these materials pose a danger when inhaled, absorbed through the skin, or ingested by a person who licks his or her fingers, eats, chews gum, or smokes in their presence.

Safety has been a concern for many years in both science laboratories and vocational education workshops. But only recently has it been recognized that many commonly used materials pose serious health risks for students and employees alike.

A 1981 survey by the Consumer Product Safety Commission concluded that school science labs routinely contain "312 stock chemicals including 27 recognized or suspected carcinogens and 11 suspected teratogens" (chemicals that cause birth defects). Other health threats—such as damage to the lungs, liver, and kidneys—come from acids, organic solvents, and other chemical substances that are not cancer agents.

Many of the specimens used for dissection in biology labs are pickled in formaldehyde, a proven carcinogen in animals and a suspected one in humans.

In many schools, voc ed shops now resemble mini-industrial workplaces, filled with sophisticated machinery and equipment, and posing health hazards similar to those found in the workplaces themselves. Dangers run the gamut: poisonous gases released during welding, carbon monoxide fumes in auto shops, toxic chemicals in cosmetology classes.

The many energy-efficient, "air-tight" school buildings constructed during

Ventilation Problems at Indian Brook

Teachers and students at Indian Brook Elementary School in Plymouth, Mass., began noticing health problems during the 1981-82 school year, more than four years after the new closed-environment school opened.

"Teachers and students were reporting frequent headaches, dizziness, nausea, and respiratory problems," recalls Susan Offner, a biology teacher and activist in the Education Association of Plymouth and Carver.

An unusually high number of childhood cancers were reported among students in the school. "Then we started counting," Offner reports. "We realized that out of 20 teacher pregnancies since 1979, there were four babies born with serious birth defects, three miscarriages, and one stillbirth. Something was terribly wrong."

Finding out what was wrong took investigations by three federal agencies, three state agencies, and one private lab.

"It was a very emotional period," says Mary LeSueur, president of the local Association. "We really weren't sure what was causing the problems."

The experts finally determined that due to a malfunction in the school's central ventilation system, no fresh air was entering the closed building. In addition, an unvented duplicating machine in the teacher's lounge was releasing methanol fumes that were circulating throughout the school.

After the duplicating machine was moved and vented, and the building's fresh air intake adjusted, the complaints of headaches, dizziness, and nausea stopped. The problem pregnancies remain unexplained.

"The most important thing," Susan Offner reflects, "is that other people learn of the problems we faced—and that they are alert for health problems in their own closed-environment schools."

—*H.S.*

. . . FACE TOXIC HAZARDS

the past decade create a new set of problems. Known as closed environments, these buildings have central ventilation systems that recirculate air—with little venting or fresh air intake. Employees and students in these schools report a wide range of health problems—including headaches, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, respiratory problems, and flu-like illnesses—symptomatic of chemical poisoning.

The buildings contain such a wide variety of potential health hazards that it's often extremely difficult to determine the source of problems in any one school. Central ventilation systems can malfunction, not allowing sufficient fresh air into the building. Or the fumes from a toxic substance in one location can be circulated throughout the school.

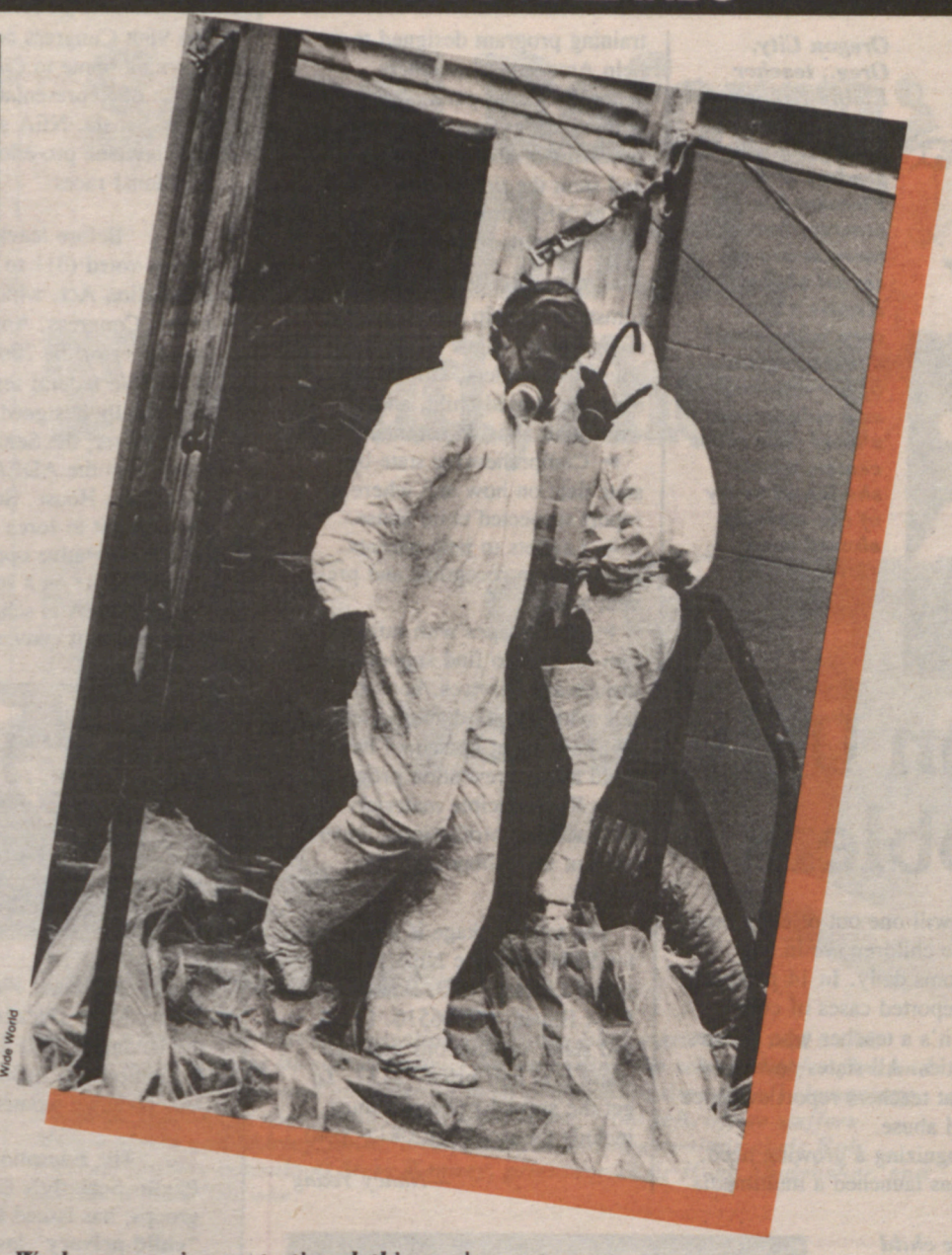
Four years ago, students and staff at Oakland (Calif.) High School developed symptoms of chemical poisoning shortly after the brand new building opened. Formaldehyde gas and other toxic substances were vaporizing from bookshelves, particle board, and carpeting in the closed-environment school. Exhaust fans had to be installed, and some areas of the school coated with a plastic sealant.

At the closed-environment Willamina (Oregon) Elementary/Middle School, local Association president Sally Davis reports, "The faculty has been complaining of frequent sinus infections and headaches, itching eyes, and extended flu-like illnesses ever since the building opened several years ago." Formaldehyde and carbon dioxide levels have been tested without finding the cause of health problems at Willamina. Davis, who teaches in the school, faces a common problem. "It's so difficult to prove anything," she says, "or to know the cause of our health complaints."

Many of America's public schools are built on or near landfills that contain toxic wastes. They are also located near nuclear plants, factories that emit dangerous pollutants, or freeways where automobile exhaust fumes cause dangerously high concentrations of lead. Our schools, in short, are subject to all hazards present in the towns, cities, and suburbs in which they're located.

Pollutants from the surrounding environment recently complicated a case of toxic detection work at Indian Brook Elementary School in Plymouth, Mass. *(see box on page 4).*

Indian Brook is located between two landfills known to contain illegally dumped hazardous wastes. It's also near a nuclear power plant that vents radioactive gases. When staff and students at the school reported a series of health problems, it took extensive testing of the school's air, soil, and water to determine that outside pollutants were not contaminating the school environment.



Wide World

Workmen wearing protective clothing and respirators carry bags of asbestos-contaminated materials from a school in New Jersey. Asbestos is just one of the toxic hazards in America's schools.

Toxic hazards in schools are a danger to all. Chemical fumes can threaten employees and students who never enter the chemistry lab; a duplicating machine's methanol fumes can be circulated throughout the school. The janitor who sweeps up clay dust at the end of the day is no more aware than the art teacher or student that the dust he inhales may contain asbestos or silica.

Wherever they're found, toxic hazards pose two types of health risks. An *acute* exposure will result in immediate and visible symptoms. The more insidious danger is from *chronic* exposure. Day after day, year after year, both teachers and support staff come into contact with hazardous substances. The damage goes unnoticed until, years later, a cancer or other serious health problem develops—its cause rarely known.

Health hazards can be controlled. In many cases, a toxic substance can be replaced by a nonpoisonous material. When a material with a toxic ingredient is crucial either to the learning process or to upkeep of the school, it should be handled with the same precautions industrial workers demand from their employers.

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Act doesn't cover public school employees. Since it's up to the legislatures to pass laws extending occupational safety and health protections to school personnel, the situation varies from state to state.

It is left to school employees to ensure that their schools are not hazardous to their health. Local Associations can form health and safety committees to become the toxic watchdogs for their schools.

Resources—people and publications—are available to assist in identifying health hazards. Using them, health and safety committees can provide valuable guidance on everything from ordering art and chemistry materials to choosing pesticides and cleaning solvents to investigating ventilation problems.

Making schools safe takes work. But our health—even our lives—and those of our students may depend on our efforts.

—Heidi Steffens

RESOURCES

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). Beginning in November 1985, OSHA will require manufacturers to provide these sheets for hazardous workplace substances. They list toxic ingredients, health hazards, precautions, etc. Reputable manufacturers already have MSDSs and will provide them on request.

Center for Occupational Hazards. Publishes wide range of inexpensive materials on art hazards and has MSDSs for many materials. While focus is on art, Center does a lot of work with schools and has information on many different toxic hazards. Will also refer you to other sources. For a publications list—or to request specific information—send self-addressed, stamped business envelope to 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038.

Safe Art Materials List. The Art and Craft Materials Institute publishes a list of art products certified as safe. Free. Send self-addressed, stamped business enevelope to 715 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116.

Manual of Safety and Health Hazards in the School Science Laboratory ($5.75). Safety in the School Science Laboratory (in-service training manual—$6.25). School Science Laboratories: A Guide to Some Hazardous Substances (emphasis on safe storage of chemicals—free with purchase of either manual). All are available—prepaid—from Council of State Science Supervisors, Rte. 2, Box 637, Lancaster, VA 22503. **Guide to Hazardous Substances** also available, free, from Consumer Product Safety Commission, EX-0/412, Washington, DC 20207, and National Science Teachers Association, 1742 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20009. NSTA also sells **Safety in the Elementary Science Classroom** for $5 plus postage and handling.

New Jersey Local Identifies Asbestos Hazard

Questions about the safety of asbestos removal in some 200 New Jersey schools created a crisis as schools prepared to open this September. Less than a week before the scheduled beginning of the school year, a state official's report charged that unsafe asbestos removal over the summer may have endangered summer workers and could pose a future threat to students and employees.

The New Jersey Education Association, on September 25, sued over 200 school boards and asbestos-related firms, demanding that they set up a trust fund to pay for regular checkups for school employees exposed to asbestos.

At least one New Jersey school district, however, is not affected by the crisis. In East Windsor, the NJEA support staff affiliate and the local parents group had successfully fought to have asbestos removed the previous year.

"We knew where the asbestos was," recalls East Windsor Regional Supportive Staff Association President Bill Sweeney. "It was in every school."

"The school board claimed the asbestos wasn't dangerous," Sweeney adds. But the parents and the Association kept insisting on action. When they finally forced the board to test all asbestos-containing materials in the schools, friable asbestos was found.

Jean-Rae Turner

Officers of the support and teachers Associations in front of one of the East Windsor, N.J., schools where they won asbestos removal. From left: Marilyn Nemeth, Bill Sweeney, Flo Riccio, and Bob Patten.

Removal began in the summer of 1983. Sweeney, who has been trained in asbestos removal, emphasizes that this process requires extreme caution.

"EPA guidelines must be strictly followed," he says. "Sloppy removal work actually increases the danger—not only for the workers, but for all employees and students in the school."

—H.S.

HUMAN RIGHTS

© Jill A. Cannefax

Oregon City, Oreg., teacher Elaine Krause uses puppets to help her first graders at Mount Pleasant Elementary become more aware of sexual abuse. Krause's concern with sexual abuse grew out of her experience as a volunteer at a local rape crisis center, where she found many of the sexually abused were children.

Combating an Ugly National Problem

This year alone, 500,000 American children will be the victims of abuse.

Experts estimate that every two minutes, somewhere in the United States a child is abused: physically, sexually, emotionally, or by neglect. One out of three girls will be sexually abused in some way by the time they're 18. So will one out of eight boys.

These children are in our classrooms daily. In 14 percent of all reported cases of child abuse, it's a teacher who notifies authorities. All states now mandate that teachers report evidence of child abuse.

Recognizing a growing need, NEA has launched a multimedia training program designed to help Association members, school systems, parents, and community groups cope with the problems of abused children—and stem the tide of future abuse.

The NEA program has 19 separate components, including—

- A handbook and three filmstrips to help school people recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect, talk to and teach an abused child, and work with abusive parents.
- Comprehensive state-by-state data on how and where to report suspected child abuse.
- Leaflets to help parents and children recognize and prevent abuse.
- Audio tapes with information on how to find support groups and services, how to talk with the child abuse victim, and how to set up school-based child abuse prevention programs.
- Reproducible materials for six one-hour professional development workshops on child abuse.

The total package is available for $274 from the NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. Local and state Associations may purchase it at half price—$137. To get the special price you must include the stock no: 0812-X-40.

—Nancy Young

Joe Di Dio

Left: Unveiling new child abuse prevention kit, NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell tells reporters, "Child abuse and neglect have been swept under the rug for too long."

Right: Materials in NEA's new multimedia kit are designed to bring communities—school employees, administrators, parents, and other concerned citizens—together to tackle one of the nation's ugliest problems.

Children's Trust Funds Help Prevent Abuse

Federal assistance for child abuse prevention programs has pretty much dried up, and these programs tend to get low priority in most state budgets. But with the growing interest in stopping abuse and neglect before it gets started, one creative funding alternative has been catching on across the country: the children's trust fund (CTF).

Developed by Lansing, Mich., pediatrician Ray E. Helfer, M.D., former vice-president of the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, this concept calls for states to raise the cost of marriage licenses, birth certificates, or divorce decrees, and then funnel these fees to appropriate groups that provide child abuse prevention services.

Monies may also be raised through tax refund checkoff. Advisory boards made up of health professionals, laypeople, or both supervise distribution of the grants.

So far 17 states have developed such trust funds, including Alabama, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, North and South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Annual 'takes' range from $50,000 in Rhode Island to $4 million in California.

Bills to create similar trusts are pending in the New Jersey and Hawaii legislatures, and the North Dakota Education Association is part of a coalition to establish one.

The prevention programs financed by these trust funds seek to avoid a breakdown in the parent-child relationship. They can be either *primary* (directed to all members of the community before abuse occurs, including education for parenthood, support groups for new parents, play groups for toddlers, and abuse awareness programs for schoolchildren) or *secondary* (directed at parents thought to be at risk for abusing or neglecting their children, including hotlines, crisis nurseries, parenting classes for adolescent mothers, and special support services for mothers who have difficulty bonding with their newborns).

Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) is now preparing federal legislation to encourage states to establish children's trust funds. To be called the Children's Challenge Grant bill, it should be taken up by the new Congress that convenes in January.

—N.Y.

WASHINGTON WATCH

The 98th Congress adjourned in early October, its members returning home to campaign for reelection. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives are up for grabs, as well as 33 seats in the Senate. NEA's Political Action Committee (NEA-PAC) has endorsed pro-education candidates in more than 300 congressional races.

✔ Before leaving town, the full House of Representatives voted (311 to 89) to consider the **American Defense Education Act**, which has been NEA's top legislative priority in this Congress. Aimed at revitalizing public education for the remainder of the 20th century, the ADEA would provide invaluable federal resources directly to school districts to support locally designed education improvement programs.

However, the Senate's unwillingness to consider the bill meant that the ADEA couldn't become law this year, even if it passed the House. So NEA and pro-ADEA House leaders decided not to force a House vote on the bill—especially since ultraconservative opponents were planning to waste the House's time on a series of anti-public education amendments.

The ADEA is scheduled for early consideration in the new Congress that convenes in January.

Sue Klemens

✔ A contingent from this summer's U.S. Olympics team paid a visit to Capitol Hill in the waning days of the 98th Congress to show support for the **Civil Rights Act of 1984**—a bill designed to overturn the *Grove City* decision handed down last February by the Supreme Court, which limited the scope of Title IX and could undermine the nation's other civil rights laws.

Volleyball star Flo Hyman (*left, with Sen. Ted Kennedy*), runner Mary Decker, and other Olympics stars hailed Title IX, the landmark 1972 law barring sex discrimination in education institutions, as making the difference for them and thousands of lesser-known women athletes.

✔ The Education Department, bowing to pressure from Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum and other ultraconservative groups, has issued final regulations for enforcing the 1978 "**child privacy**" law authored by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah)—a law that gives license to the federal government to harass schools and teachers over such courses as sex and drug education, civics, government, and almost any kind of instruction that involves discussion or inquiry methods.

NEA and other major education groups had filed comments last spring protesting the vagueness of key terms in the draft regulations and asking the Department to rewrite or drop them. But the final regs, released this fall, are basically unchanged. They set up a new Family Educational Rights and Privacy Office within the Education Department to "investigate, process, and review" parental complaints that a teacher or school is violating the Hatch amendment.

✔ The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in early October in the case of *State of New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, with a ruling expected in December or January. For the first time, the high Court will be deciding whether the constitutional guarantee of freedom from unreasonable **searches** restricts school officials in searching students' personal effects—and if so, to what extent.

NEA filed a friend-of-the-court brief asking the justices to rule that the Fourth Amendment, while affording students less protection from searches than adults have outside the school setting, does require a "reasonable suspicion" that any search will produce evidence that a crime has been committed or a school rule violated.

✔ NEA lobbied successfully for passage of a bill to make it difficult to remove disabled people from the **Social Security** rolls. The measure, HR 3755, was developed in response to the Reagan Administration's policy of 'accelerated review' of disability cases—a process that stopped benefit payments for 490,000 recipients while the status of their cases was under review. Family hardship and disruptions—even a number of suicides—have been attributed to the Administration's harsh policy.

✔ The Association is also working for a change in federal tax laws that would restore tax-exempt status to educational assistance provided by employers (including school districts) as a **fringe benefit**. The exemption expired last December, and NEA has joined a national coalition seeking its reinstatement.

CHANGING TIMES

School Reform: The Good, The Bad, the ???

No fewer than 240 commissions, task forces, panels, and think tanks have now passed judgment on what ails our schools and how they can be 'cured.'

Every state legislature has proposed some changes, most of which include tougher high school graduation requirements, higher standards for teacher education, alternative methods of textbook selection and curriculum design, revised teacher pay plans, and longer school days and years.

But it's in the nation's 16,000 local school districts that we'll find out how well all these proposals will actually work. Early reports indicate mixed results.

Class Size. Indiana's state legislature has appropriated $90 million for a new program called Prime Time. The goal is to bring down the student-to-teacher ratio to 18:1 in first grades across the state.

Prime Time, which would add 4,000 new teaching positions over the next four years, won strong backing from the Indiana State Teachers Association (ISTA). But in surveying its locals, ISTA has found some problems, especially in Indianapolis.

"I have time to read to my students now," says Pat Browne, a teacher at P.S. 48 who was one of only two Indianapolis second grade teachers chosen to participate in the Prime Time project. "I can give them more individual attention, and they seem to have a more positive attitude about themselves and school in general. But while I'm sitting there in heaven with a class of 14, the other second grade teacher in my school has 31—plus she gets all incoming students. That's not fair to her or her students."

The state board of education is investigating the Indianapolis school system to check for violations of state law.

Curriculum. Last year—as part of a statewide excellence effort that predates all the major reform reports—70 Michigan school districts participated in pilot projects aimed at helping local districts assess the quality of their curriculum, staffing, and instructional methods. Guidelines for this assessment were developed by a statewide task force representing a cross-section of education and community groups, including members of the Michigan Education Association.

Teacher Salaries. Utah and Florida legislators chose very different courses as they passed a series of teacher pay reform measures. Predictably, both plans received mixed reactions locally.

Utah picked a career ladder approach, whereby teachers get more pay for additional duties and responsibilities. Florida adopted merit schools (optional for local districts), which roughly translates into merit pay for teachers, since only teachers employed in meritorious schools (the top 25 percent of the schools able to improve student achievement over a year's time) get state-funded bonuses.

In Provo, the career ladder plan was a year in the making and involved both teachers and administrators.

"I feel this is a step in the right direction," says June Schofield, president-elect of the Provo Education Association and a teacher at Edgemont Elementary. "Teachers' views were listened to, and teacher input was willingly accepted."

Provo uses $430,000 a year (its share of $15 million set aside by the state legislature for local career ladders) plus another $600,000 raised locally to fund its program. Teachers progress up the ladder from "certified" (those in their first three years of teaching) to "professional" to "teacher specialist" to "teacher leader." The two top categories are for those teachers who assume more and greater responsilities. Provo's career ladder approach also includes an extra 9.5 paid professional days, to be used exclusively to prepare for the new school year.

As we go to press, the Utah Education Association is surveying its members to determine how the career ladder concept is working around the state.

Florida's merit schools proposal, which the state legislature has funded to the tune of $20 million a year, has run into opposition from the Florida Teaching Profession-NEA and local Associations as well. Under the plan, school districts had until October 1 to design a local program to qualify for bonus money from the state. At press time, teachers in Orange, Palm Beach, Escambia, Seminole, and Leon Counties, among others, had rejected the merit schools idea.

Leon Classroom Teachers Association President David Clark labels "unfair" and "potentially divisive" his district's proposed plan, which would have brought some $294,000 to Leon County schools.

"We've spent the past six or seven years trying to upgrade the quality of education in *all* our schools," notes Clark. "With the merit schools concept, only a quarter of our schools would qualify for state money."

School Day/Year. Districts across the country have seized on the idea of increasing the length of the instructional day, or year, or both. But whether simply adding more time automatically increases learning is debatable.

Teachers in Salem, Oregon, don't believe it does. Their administration has unilaterally extended daily class time for first and second graders by 45 minutes. In addition, school officials scrapped one-day-a-week early release for all students, thereby eliminating most preparation time for elementary teachers.

The Salem Education Association is awaiting hearings on an unfair labor practice charge and contract grievance it's filed over the changes.

"Under the guise of educational excellence," explains Salem Education Association President Nora Schliske, "our teachers are shouldering more burdens—and in part teachers are becoming babysitters. In every school I know about, 15 minutes of the additional 45 are being used for recess. It's a sham, because at the same time the district has lengthened the day, it's also increased class sizes—and provided no additional materials or money for materials to use during the added time. It's trying to get 'educational excellence' without being willing to put any money into it."

True excellence doesn't come from increasing contact time, Schliske points out, "but from improving what goes on during contact time."

Undoubtedly, NEA members across the country would agree with Schliske. They want real school reform. Quick fixes, glib phrases, puny financial support, and symbolic ideas like sending teachers into space won't do.

—Bill Fischer

© Jill A. Cannefax

Oregon's Salem Education Association (SEA) has filed a grievance and unfair labor practice against its school district for extending the school day for first and second grade students and eliminating most preparation time for all elementary teachers. Discussing discussing SEA's actions are, from left, office staffers Margie Myers and Shirley Jones, vice-president and negotiations chair Rob Worral, UniServ consultant Steve Kenney, grievance chair Hugh Studebaker, and president Nora Schliske.

Bill Spooner

Leon Classroom Teachers Association President David Clark says Florida's merit schools plan is a bad piece of legislation that would divide teachers and the school community. His local has rejected the plan, as have several other NEA affiliates throughout the state.

Joe Di Dio

Indianapolis second grade teacher Pat Browne likes Indiana's new Prime Time program because it allows her to spend more time with individual students. But Browne is upset that some of her colleagues' class sizes have increased, a violation that the state education department is investigating.

NEA Aims for Reform Consensus

While more and more states and districts this fall have begun to implement various ideas for "reforming" the nation's public schools, progress remains uneven.

"Quality reform won't happen," says NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell, "until the public understands that America's schools need a total restructuring, not just quick-fix tinkering."

Last July, the nearly 7,000 delegates to NEA's annual Representative Assembly took a giant step toward that restructuring. They adopted an *Open Letter to America on Schools, Students, and Tomorrow* that spelled out a new direction for American education.

The full text of the *Open Letter* appeared in the October *NEA Today*. It envisions a system of local schools, each educationally directed by its faculty, that offer students of all ages the opportunity to truly master what is taught.

Realizing this visionary future will, of course, demand the active cooperation of other education groups, parents, and community leaders. That's why NEA will be reaching out to the educational community in the coming weeks and months to discuss concrete steps to advance a meaningful education reform agenda.

State Side

NORTHEAST

Vermont-NEA has launched a two-pronged offensive to increase the state's share of education costs and to significantly raise teacher salaries.

The perennial budget crunches in Vermont's 254 school districts are largely due to the way-below-average contribution from the state level, the Association contends. The state now pays 28 percent, compared to a national average of 48 percent, of the total costs of public education. Vermont's local districts pick up an average of 65 percent; the federal government's share is 7 percent.

Vermont-NEA is calling on the state legislature to pass a bill to raise the level of state funding to 48 percent of total school costs, thereby easing the pressure on local property taxes. To do so would mean spending an additional $113 million in state revenues a year.

Vermont-NEA wants starting teacher salaries raised from the current $11,200 to $20,000. Teachers with 10 years' experience and a master's degree should get $35,000, the Association argues.

MIDWEST

Fed up after years of being taken for granted, employees in Missouri's 53 state schools for the handicapped are organizing through Missouri NEA to get off the bottom rung of the economic ladder.

The 400 teachers and 500 support staff in the state schools have their salaries and benefits determined unilaterally by the legislature. While the certification requirements for these teachers are often more rigid than in the local public school districts, salaries tend to be much lower. Dormitory aides earn the magnificent sum of $6,500 a year.

"We have no salary schedule," points out Marian Stuart, a classroom teacher at Lakeview Woods School in Kansas City. "We're just a line item in the state's annual budget.

"Despite the problems, most of us stay on because we really care about the kids," Stuart adds.

Some of the state schools are small and isolated; employees are largely cut off from contact with their colleagues elsewhere.

Last school year, nurses and physical education teachers—who travel from school to school—began to spread the word about a meeting with Missouri NEA leaders planned for June. Some 25 people from the state schools turned out. The meeting gave birth to a new Association affiliate, known as Missouri State Schools NEA, whose membership now stands at 55.

"The opportunity to share ideas with others who work in similar situations has already helped make us feel more professional," Stuart says. "And as organized educators, we can lobby the state legislature to improve our working conditions."

WEST

A class-action antitrust suit initiated by NEA-New Mexico in 1979 has resulted in a $74 million settlement between the state's natural gas producers and consumers.

The unusual case began in the mid-1970s, when New Mexico school boards were citing rising utility prices as one reason they couldn't afford teacher salary increases. Noting that natural gas prices had jumped 500 percent between January 1976 and June 1979, NEA-New Mexico asked its lawyers to investigate.

They found evidence of price-fixing among gas producers and filed suit against them on behalf of New Mexico's residential customers, the state government (including its colleges and universities), and the state's electric company (the largest buyer of natural gas.) Oddly, the school districts that use natural gas chose not to participate in the original suit; they filed their action only this year.

As a result of the Association suit, which was settled out of court, consumers will receive rebates of from $200 to $600 per household—half of it this year, half in 1986. The state colleges and universities will get more than $5 million.

Comments NEA-New Mexico president Jude Mason: "The consumer refunds that many teachers will get as a result of our suit will be partial compensation for the raises they have not received."

When outraged parents try to get a guidance counselor fired for lending their daughter books and magazines about psychology, or when angry book banners rummage—uninvited—through a drama teacher's personal library at school searching for objectionable plays, the Oklahoma Education Association is ready for them.

A year ago, an OEA survey indicated that the most likely local attacks on education would come in the form of textbook challenges and attempts at censorship. OEA's response was to set up a statewide Forces on Education Committee that would develop model textbook adoption and reconsideration policies and other materials to help local Associations defend teachers under such attack.

So when the events described above actually happened last spring in the small town of Eufaula, committee chair Kathy Smith and an OEA staffer were on the scene almost immediately. Working with leaders of the Eufaula Classroom Teachers Association and others in the community, they assisted the school board in adopting a textbook reconsideration policy for future use.

Says Pat Satterfield, then ECTA president, "If OEA and UniServ hadn't been able to help us immediately, some very negative things for education would have happened before we got a new policy adopted."

MID-ATLANTIC

Delaware school district budgets no longer depend on property wealth, thanks to a new state law that equalizes school funding.

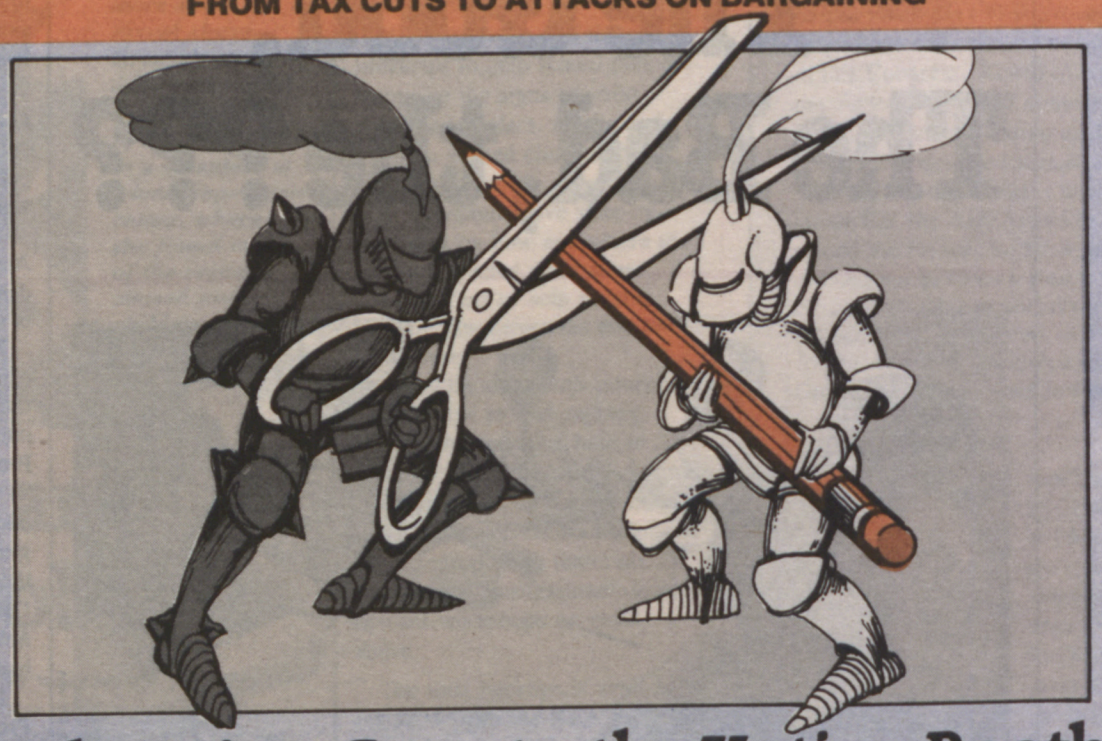
Equalization has long been one of the Delaware State Education Association's top lobbying priorities. The bill to bring it about was passed by the legislature last June and signed into law by the governor in July. It provides new state money for each of Delaware's 19 school districts, but districts with lower tax bases receive more, based on a statewide table.

The additional state aid has already led to salary increases for teachers in 12 districts, with negotiations continuing elsewhere.

The largest pay hike so far is in Delaware's poorest district, Caesar Rodney, where the school board voted to allocate all its equalization money—$700,000—for salaries. As a result, Caesar Rodney's 400 teachers each take home at least $40 more a week than last year—and its beginning teachers are now the highest paid in the state.

"The raises were the result of an assertive effort on the part of members," reports Caesar Rodney Education Association president Ann Conley. "We planned what we wanted, worked hard to get it, and won the cooperation of our community and board of education."

FROM TAX CUTS TO ATTACKS ON BARGAINING



Education Goes to the Voting Booth

On November 6, voters in close to a dozen states will be considering constitutional amendments or ballot referendums that relate to public schools.

Association activists in Oregon, Michigan, California, and Nevada are in especially tough battles against tax limitation referendums. Oregon's Ballot Measure 2, for example, would reduce property taxes to their 1983 level, limit increments to 2 percent per year, and be next to impossible to override.

A tax-cutting referendum in Michigan, the so-called Voter's Choice (Proposal C), would roll back all local taxes and fees not approved by the electorate to their 1981 levels. A cut of this magnitude could spell disaster for public schools and colleges.

California voters will decide on whether to amend Proposition 13, their massive 1978 tax-cutting measure, so as to rebate $1.5 billion to some property owners. CTA leaders underscore the state education department's estimate that the measure could cut $500 million from the public schools' budget in the first year after it took effect.

The Nevada State Education Association has been organizing against Question 12—a proposed constitutional amendment that would make future tax increases almost impossible.

The one bright note in tax-related referendums this year is in West Virginia, where the Association is working for passage of Amendment No. 4. This far-reaching measure would generate new funds for public education by equalizing property tax support to schools statewide—and would raise the state sales tax by 1 percent to guarantee $40 million a year for 15 years of school construction.

Other states with important ballot issues include—

► *Arizona*, where the Association is battling a constitutional amendment that could bring the demise of collective bargaining by ending the power of local school districts to make contracts lasting more than a year.

► *New Hampshire*, where the Association supports a constitutional amendment to ensure that state retirement system funds are not diverted to any other purpose.

► *Minnesota*, where the Association is backing two constitutional amendments to bring about greater efficiency in the management of the permanent school fund so as to increase investment earnings.

INTERNATIONAL

Ah, To Be a Teacher With Time To Teach

by Nancy J. Brown

Association member Nancy J. Brown spent the 1983-84 school year as a high school English teacher in Zeven, a small town in northern Germany, under the Fulbright Exchange Program. A ten-year teaching veteran, Brown currently teaches German at Lake Braddock High School in Fairfax County, Va.

I am in culture shock, experiencing a difficult readjustment after a year as an exchange teacher in Germany. Teaching has often frustrated me, but I never realized how radically different things could be until I taught overseas.

The most striking contrast is in the amount of time teachers spend at school. German high school teachers have three to five classes a day and are at school only for those classes. The normal day is from 8 a.m. to 1 or 1:30 p.m., with some schools in session six days a week. My day at the academic Zeven Gymnasium (high school) began at 7:50 a.m. and ended, at the latest, at 1:10 p.m.

Germany's teachers have no lunches at school, no planning periods, no hour after classes have ended. They're treated as professionals—no one seems afraid teachers won't work unless they're in the school building.

Doing planning, preparation, and correcting at home means teachers can use their time most effectively. In Germany I'd have lunch and relax a bit at home before doing school work—and I often finished in time to have an evening free. Here in the U.S., I'm so drained by the end of my last class that the final hour I'm forced to spend at school is neither creative nor useful. By the time I get home, eat, and relax, I face an evening of school work.

Another startling difference is that the primary function of a teacher in Germany is actually to teach—not keep records. No keeping track of unexcused absences, tardies, warnings, parent contacts; no teacher plan books, discipline referral forms, cut lists; no passes to the library, office, or restroom; no in-house suspensions with detailed descriptions of assignments to be made up. Believe it or not, German schools function without any of this red tape.

Joe Di Dio

Brown at home in her classroom at Lake Braddock High in northern Virginia.

Teachers in Germany are given much more respect than their U.S. counterparts—and their status is evident in their salaries and retirement benefits. I know of no German teachers who work a second job out of financial need. The result is teachers who are not drained by working at nights or on weekends.

I was amazed to find that every high school administrator in Germany continues to teach. With everyone from principals on down teaching at least six hours a week, no German administrator can ever totally lose touch with the reality of the classroom. This makes a real difference in the way students—and teachers—perceive administrators.

The German teachers' main responsibility is to teach—and their students bear greater responsibility for their own learning. Teachers aren't expected to constantly drill and review, or to tutor students for free after class. Teachers don't contact parents concerning every change in academic performance; nor are there interim or quarterly grades to keep parents up to date on their child's progress. Parents are contacted much less frequently about behavior or absences.

Joe Di Dio

After an eye-opening stint as a teacher in Germany last year, Nancy Brown returned to the time-consuming paperwork and other noneducational duties that burden most U.S. teachers.

It's up to the students to be present, on time—and to keep up with the classwork. I never even had to provide paper or pencils.

American teachers are asked to do too many jobs. Each of these additional jobs takes time away from the primary purpose—to teach young people. Every year teachers are given additional burdens; every change means another task for teachers. And the added tasks usually have little to do with actual teaching.

Things can be different. We should use the current interest in quality schools to push for freeing up teachers to teach.

School systems that are different from ours can challenge our attitudes. German schools are not ideal. But they—and others—raise important issues about the role of teachers. These issues need to be addressed if we are to effect more than cosmetic changes in the quality of education in this country.

Georgia Hires West German Teachers for Science, Math

Georgia, like many states, finds itself without enough qualified math and science teachers. West Germany finds itself with several thousand highly trained math and science teachers—and no teaching jobs.

Result? A controversial program in which Georgia school districts this fall hired eight English-speaking teachers from West Germany.

The West German teachers are determined to bridge any cultural gaps.

One contrast they noticed right off was in student interest levels. "In German high schools, you have the highest levels," says Guenter Hoppenworth, who is teaching science at Fulton County's M.D. Collins High School. "Here, I have good and bad students in the same classroom."

Andreas Kohler, who's teaching math at Cherokee County High School, agrees. "German students work more responsibly," he says.

One reason, of course, is that West German schools channel students into vocational or academic programs at a young age. Students in academic high schools have been tested for admittance. Naturally there's higher interest among students—and parents.

"In Germany, if you say you're going to call a parent," muses Kohler, "everyone is shocked. German parents give more support to teachers."

Hoppenworth finds other contrasts as well. "The facilities here are good," he says, "but there aren't many supplies. This science class was taught largely by lecture before, and few supplies were ordered. The curriculum is also broader. In Germany we don't do this many things, but what we do we do in depth."

Greg Jones

Guenter Hoppenworth

Among the "many things" the West Germans have found to do are mountains of paperwork. "I thought Germany was bad with all this bureaucracy," says Hoppenworth. "But America is worse!"

Comments Werner Rogers, Georgia's associate state superintendent of schools—and the primary force behind the 'teacher import' program, "Our school structure has made a big difference in how they teach as compared to how they were trained to teach. In Germany, they're used to a day that begins at 7:45 and ends at 1:30 without a lunch break. They use the remainder of the day to grade papers and prepare lesson plans. Those lesson plans tend to be much more detailed and comprehensive than the ones done by American teachers."

One thing that's pleased the German teachers has been the friendliness of their new colleagues.

"Teachers here are very nice and helpful," says Hoppenworth. "They invite you in to see them teach a class. German teachers would never do that."

The 'imported' teachers have noticed a big difference in training, prestige, and pay levels, too.

German teachers attend four years of college and must pass a state test before being admitted to a teacher training program. That program involves 18 months of classroom internship along with afternoons spent in professional training. At the end of those 18 months, teacher candidates must pass a second state test before receiving certification.

With such rigorous training, how does Germany find itself with a surplus of teachers? One explanation is the pay.

"German teachers are paid 30 to 50 percent above the average German wage," says Kohler. "Teachers aren't the highest paid people in Germany, for sure, but they're well paid and have very good benefits."

The German teachers earn Georgia's starting salary of slightly over $14,000. They must also pass the state's subject area certification test and take one college course at their own expense to be certified to teach beyond this year.

"We wish the best for the German teachers," says Ed Deaton, president of the Georgia Association of Educators. "It just seems a tragedy that low salaries keep us from attracting the best and brightest Georgia students into the profession."

"I support opinion that U.S. teachers are not well paid," says Kohler. "I would have no trouble carrying a bigger paycheck home!"

Greg Jones

Andreas Kohler

Each of the eight teachers is working under a one-year contract. To remain in the U.S., their local school systems must offer them a contract for next year. The immigration laws prohibit them from remaining in the U.S. for more than three years.

Georgia may not be alone in the quest to shore up teacher shortage areas with West German teachers. California has established a task force to monitor the Georgia plan, with the idea of launching a similar program next year.

—Eddy Gattis

Local Look

CONNECTICUT

For the 145 local NEA affiliates in Connecticut, going on strike has become a thing of the past, thanks in large measure to the 1979 passage of a last-best-offer binding arbitration law, under which salary impasses are submitted to a neutral third party for resolution.

In the five strike-free years since the law took effect, about half the teacher contracts bargained have gone to binding arbitration.

Connecticut Education Association President Robert Eagan reports, "Since the law's been in effect, salary settlements for teachers have shown a steady—and in some cases dramatic—rise. Not only has the law worked to end the bargaining chaos that used to occur, but it's proved to be financially beneficial to teachers as well."

In recent years, Connecticut locals have won salary increases approaching an average of 10 percent a year.

Connecticut is one of three states in the nation with a final-offer binding arbitration law covering teachers. The others are Wisconsin and Iowa.

DELAWARE

Local associations now have some guidelines on what is negotiable under Delaware's two-year-old bargaining law.

The precedent-setting clarification came in a Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) ruling on an unfair labor practice charge filed by the Appoquinimink Education Association when its school board refused to bargain on a number of items.

PERB sided with the Association, ruling all the items in question legally bargainable. It defined 65 percent of them as mandatory for bargaining—and said the remaining 35 percent fall in the "permissive bargaining" category.

"RIF and recall, transfer, evaluation, termination for just cause, and various other employee rights were judged mandatory items to be negotiated," reports local president Richard Nabb. "As the result of this decision, we are assured that these items remain negotiable."

WISCONSIN

When the local school board tried to turn itself into a censor, the Racine Education Association took prompt, forceful action that turned a potential First Amendment defeat into victory.

Last June the board voted 6-2 not to approve five textbooks—books twice approved by its own textbook selection committee. Reason? The books—*American Foreign Policy, vol. II*; *The American Pageant, vol. II*; *Portrait of America, vol. II*; *Living Today*; and *Married and Single Life*—were too liberal, didn't teach straight moral values, and were too opinionated on the Vietnam War, the board said.

One board member observed that one book contained judgmental writing and "a lot more funny pictures of Republicans and nicer ones of Democrats."

Within 24 hours of the board's action, REA Executive Director James Ennis announced the Association's intention to file a lawsuit challenging the censorship move. Public protest and extensive press coverage followed REA's threat. A week after its vote, the board approved all five disputed books.

But Ennis says the war isn't over "until citizens in this community take the steps necessary to elect a school board whose members share a commitment to freedom to teach and to learn."

WASHINGTON

Money wasn't the issue in a two-day strike by the Longview Education Association at the end of August. LEA members were after basic rights they had never enjoyed.

Longview sits on the Columbia River, near Mount St. Helens. Its teachers wanted contract language defining the workday and providing pay for evening work, as well as a class size policy, personal leave, and guaranteed planning time. The only monetary issue was raises for school nurses.

"This strike was five or six years in the making," says LEA President Rex Davis.

Two months of negotiations and mediation over the summer failed to produce agreement. So the 377 LEA teachers and 80 substitutes went on strike August 30, the first of two teacher days before students reported to school. Negotiations resumed the next day—and by day's end the LEA members won their basic demands.

"The district got our message: we're serious about bargaining and expect them to be equally so," Davis reports. "Two things really helped. First, our Association was totally united. Second, Longview is a union community, and we received strong support from the Central Labor Council."

ALABAMA

Traditionally, teachers have been among the only professionals lacking the right to duty-free time for a lunch break. In Birmingham, that's changing. But not without a few problems.

Earlier this year, the Alabama legislature passed an Association-backed bill that granted teachers a minimum of 30 minutes' duty-free time. The intent was to give teachers a chance to enjoy lunch. But Birmingham school officials saw a legal loophole: they decided that the requirements of the new mandate were met by the 45-minute planning period already allotted the teachers.

That didn't sit well with the 1,850 members of the Birmingham Education Association. UniServ Director Sandra Harris sought out the local superintendent.

Result? School officials have retreated from their legal nit-picking. They've agreed that the planning time and the lunch period are distinct.

OKLAHOMA

Head cook Pauline Hadley and cafeteria worker Imogene Lafon are back in the kitchen at the Wann Public School this fall, serving up the homemade pizza and hot rolls they're famous for. Last year was one they had to sit out.

Their story began in 1982, when teachers and education support staff in the tiny district (fewer than 200 students) got together to form Wann Educators/NEA. One of the new local's first acts was to secure for Hadley and Lafon all of their state-mandated salary increase—some of which the superintendent had diverted to another use.

In the spring of 1983, the two veteran employees were nonrenewed without cause. The scuttlebut was that they were being punished for joining the Association.

With help from the Oklahoma Education Association, earlier this year the two women reached an agreement with the board that reinstates them with full benefits, provides back pay, and guarantees no reference to the nonrenewal in their files.

Concludes Hadley: "I would encourage support personnel to become Association members. I didn't think this kind of thing could happen to someone who had worked for a school district for 21 years—which I did—but now I know it could happen to anyone."

MICHIGAN MERGES TEACHERS AND ESP

Ypsilanti Local's Got Them All

Elwood Landis

The new MEA family in Ypsilanti includes, from left, Michael Waite, mail person; Hellen Priest, custodian; Marcia Aldrich, assistant cook; Edna Massey, custodian; Mary Carey, head cook; Willie Brooks, custodian; Shirley King, media center aide; Joey Jobkar, custodian; and Shirley Blair, service center secretary.

Members of the Ypsilanti Support Staff Association (YSSA)—like some 14,500 support staff across the state—have joined forces with the 80,000 teacher members of the Michigan Education Association.

"We're stronger than ever," says YSSA President Shirley Blair, a secretary in the maintenance/custodial department. "It's great to be part of a large family."

The key step toward the merger of the MEA and its Michigan Educational Support Personnel Association (MESPA) affiliate came last spring when the MEA Representative Assembly voted to give support staff full membership rights in the Association. MESPA delegates then sealed the merger at their statewide meeting in May.

What the merger means in Ypsilanti is that the nearly 400-member Ypsilanti Teachers Association and the 195-member YSSA are working together for common interests.

YSSA is a strong bargaining unit, including custodians, bus drivers, electricians, carpenters, boiler operators, plumbers, mechanics, printers, utility workers, data processors, graphic artists, cafeteria and food service workers, warehouse workers, mail processors, aides, secretaries, and switchboard operators.

YSSA affiliated with MESPA back in 1981 after members voted to sever their ties with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Shirley Blair expresses her members' satisfaction with the Association services they've received.

"We negotiated our first contract in 1981," she recalls, "and we're now about to begin negotiating our third. We can see a real difference. We have better contracts, and our benefits have increased considerably. There's no doubt that our unit made the right decision."

Blair says YSSA members are especially pleased with the "personal attention" they get.

"I can't say enough about our contact with our UniServ director," she reports. "It's good to know that when you make a call for help, no matter how small the problem, there's someone who'll answer—and take immediate action."

Now Blair sees increasing strength for school workers because of the merger. And she has advice for other locals: "Do what we have done. Go wall-to-wall. You'll *all* profit."

STUDENT COUNSELING

Peer Approach Cools Conflict At Oregon School

by Nancy Hersey

On the surface, my junior high school is like any other middle-class suburban school. It has the usual jean-clad seventh and eighth graders, pep rallies, and fads.

But what makes it unique is a 'student specialist' program, in which scholastically and socially successful eighth graders help less fortunate students adjust.

The program works on a one-to-one basis and takes many forms: an honor student in math tutoring someone with a failing grade; a member of the basketball team shooting baskets with a mildly retarded student; a teen with a friendly personality showing a newcomer around.

Before the program's inception five years ago, the school's social climate was quite different. As a guidance counselor, my days then were spent helping students resolve conflicts and listening to their reasons for being perpetually absent. Some of the worst offenders were handicapped kids who'd been mainstreamed and brought with them inappropriate mannerisms and behavior, and kids at the bottom of the social heap.

Conversely, some of the sweetest kids were those who'd received ample doses of love and acceptance. I needed to find a way to put the two kinds of kids together.

With the help of several colleagues—particularly our school's learning specialist, Chuck Kuhnhausen—I developed the student specialist program, basing it on the premise that we all respond to the emotions and attitudes of those around us.

As our first step, we selected successful eighth graders and asked if they would agree to be trained to help and support classmates who had problems. Then, as now, I looked for honor students with self-confidence and kindly attitudes toward those around them. I solicited recommendations from my colleagues.

© Jill A. Cannefax

Student specialists at Dale J. Ickes Junior High help their classmates succeed in work and play. Above: Sharon Bauer tutors Chuck Grohs in math. Left: specialists Mike Pool and Joe Brookhouse joke with Ethan Hjorton (center). Below: Tiffany Bolte helps Tinh Nguyen with his reading comprehension.

To encourage the students' cooperation, we provided incentives. First, status symbolism: participation would be by invitation only. Moreover, they had to want to help—and be willing to give without feeling superior.

Second, fun: our training included a trip to the beach. That first year 15 out of 250 eighth graders became specialists. The number has since doubled. (Our total school enrollment is 500.)

We now choose specialists each spring for the following school year. Training takes place during four class periods in the first two weeks of the fall term. Training sessions feature several guest speakers: the psychologist for our school district, a genetics counselor from the nearby University of Oregon, special education teachers, handicapped adults, parents of handicapped children, and past program participants.

Trainees visit hospitals and rehabilitation centers to learn about the causes and treatments of mental, emotional, and physical disabilities. We tell trainees about successful people who were once considered handicapped, including Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, and Abraham Lincoln. We point out that although failure and discouragement are part of life, they needn't consume us.

Assignments are based on requests from department heads. If a specialist asks to work in a particular subject area, we try to honor that request. Many of them work with special ed students or with youngsters in the reading lab of a nearby elementary school. Students receiving help agree beforehand to work with the specialists assigned to them.

Specialists' actions are limited only by their imaginations: Amy and Chris play basketball with a lonely seventh grader who is often harassed by classmates and frequently absent. Their simple action causes the harassment to stop—and the girl's attendance to improve.

Tom patiently explains to emotionally handicapped Troy that he shouldn't call other students nasty names. Troy pays more attention to Tom than he would to an adult.

I'm overwhelmed by the decency, integrity, and kindness these kids display. All they needed was an opportunity to put their feelings into practice.

The student specialist program is built upon the innate energy and idealism of young people. It helps participants grow by having them focus on others. Actually, the program is an extension of what classroom teachers have been doing all along: improving life by showing students how to correct injustices. Isn't that what education is all about?

Association member Nancy Hersey is a guidance counselor at Dale J. Ickes Junior High in Milwaukie, Oregon.

Similar Programs Catching On

More and more schools are now sponsoring programs that encourage students to help other students—and sometimes to reach out to the surrounding community as well.

One such program, at Lawrence Central High in Indianapolis, Ind., extends well beyond the school walls. Some 60 selected sophomores, juniors, and seniors work as 'peer facilitators,' sometimes hand-to-hand with mental health outreach workers based at the school.

They provide a variety of volunteer services, ranging from tutoring failing classmates to working with nursing home residents to giving presentations at nearby elementary schools—where they discuss such problems as facing a bully or coping with parents' divorce. This fall, the facilitators are being trained to give their presentations in the guise of a popular local cartoon character, thereby creating instant rapport with their audiences.

The high schoolers also work individually with elementary and middle school students, tutoring them or lending an ear to their problems. When visiting nursing homes, they talk with the residents individually and explore ways they might handle problems.

The program functions like a regular class; students who participate earn academic credit. For the first nine weeks of the school year, students receive training; after that they divide their class time between field work and further training.

Students must apply for acceptance into the program.

"We look for four things when selecting peer facilitators: concern for others, maturity, good overall ratings by three teachers, and available transportation," explains Victor Bardonner, NEA member and former Lawrence counselor who set up the program. "Transportation's important because our students have to travel around the community quite a bit."

Florida's Winter Park High School offers two help programs. One provides tutoring services, while the other functions as an extension of the guidance department.

The tutoring program, now in its 13th year, is run by the school's National Honor Society and its sponsor, Maryann Soinski. It works simply but effectively. Posted prominently in the school is a list of the 52 Honor Society members, each with a phone number and one or more subject 'specialties.' To get help, any of the school's remaining 2,150 students just has to make contact and arrange a mutually agreeable study schedule.

Winter Park's other helping-hand program, now five years old, is the "teenaiders" effort sponsored by counselors Betsy Folk and Bob Milstead. Like the peer facilitation program in Indianapolis, this one functions as a regular class for academic credit. Counselors select the 26 students who participate.

Teenaiders do many things counselors do: register students, conduct sessions on colleges and careers, and even try to help disruptive students and underachievers with school problems.

"Winter Park's student-counselor ratio is 400 to 1," Folk explains. "Teenaiders lower these odds by working with small groups of students and sometimes even one-on-one with kids who need help."

—Diane Dismuke

RESOURCES

Idea Exchange

Newspapers: Cheap and Versatile Learning Tool

Newspapers are relevant teaching tools for all ages, and they come at a bargain price, points out Norma Livo, an education professor at the University of Colorado, Denver. Livo offers tried-and-true suggestions:

► Read newspapers yourself—thoroughly.

► See if your local paper has a Newspapers in Education service, offering a consultant to provide an in-service workshop and bargain-rate subscriptions.

► Start a newspaper clipping file. In language arts, for instance, collect examples of good writing style, a range of writing styles (from ads to theatrical reviews), references to literary classics, articles about language or censorship.

► Develop activity cards that call for article searches ("Find an article that didn't give enough information, find the missing information, and complete the article") or require responses to specific articles ("Do you think the attached article is well researched? Why?").

► Develop creative writing, science, or social studies interest centers. For example, collect "Dear Abby" letters for students to answer. Groups can then compare their answers to one another's and to the answers in the paper.

► Give parents a list of newspaper activities to carry out as a family.

► Invite newspaper employees to come and discuss their work with the class.

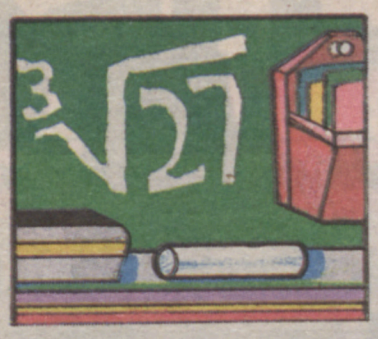
► Have students make scrapbooks of clippings about topics that interest them.

Second Time Around... Can Be Better

A child who repeats a grade is often in danger of losing self-esteem. To counter this tendency, Junior High School No. 2 in Trenton, N.J., has developed a system for giving repeaters extra responsibility and attention. They have special duties on occasions like Black History Month, Valentine's Day, and National Teachers' Day.

And each year for the past five years, reports basic skills teacher Almeta Miller, the class with the most repeaters has been named to help put on the American Education Week open house. Using the AEW theme (this year it's "Educational Excellence: Our Nation's Strongest Defense"), some students make posters, some write articles for the school newsletter, and others provide ideas for displays, bulletin boards, and showcases. Still others choose to help update the invitation list, or to write the invitations to parents, relatives, friends, and community leaders.

A photo of the students who did the work appears along with the local newspaper's announcement of the open house.



Getting Down to Work

Seventh graders can think of a lot of ways not to settle down, and students at Big Walnut Intermediate School in Sunbury, Ohio, are no exception. But Marilyn Ross's math students buckle right down to work when they come into class and see this notice on the board: *Take a piece of paper from the box. Work the problem of the day that's posted on the bulletin board. A correct answer is worth 1 bonus point. You have five minutes.* (Bonus points are used to improve scores on homework papers. Wrong answers are worth nothing.)

All students are quiet, busy, and interested in getting a right answer, Ross reports. Better yet, she adds, "Skills improve, and that's my goal!"

Combination Classes: How Do You Cope?

Imagine trying to teach U.S. and European history to a combined fifth and sixth grade class in one 45-minute period a day. That's the problem Katherine J. Revels of Dublin, N.C., faces.

How, she asks, do you handle combination classes without an aide? And what do other states do to help their teachers of multi-age classes?

If you have information or ideas that might help Revels, send them to "Multi-Age," Idea Exchange, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

TV/Radio Tips

NEA recommends the following broadcasts to members, students, and their families:

Great Performances—*PBS, Fridays; check local listings for times.* November 2: "An Englishman Abroad," starring Alan Bates and Coral Browne. November 9: "Pagliacci," starring Placido Domingo and Teresa Stratas. November 16: "You Can't Take It With You," starring Colleen Dewhurst and Jason Robards, Jr. November 23: "Alice in Wonderland," starring the late Richard Burton and his daughter Kate. November 30: "Much Ado About Nothing." (Study guide available from your local public television station.)

Ellis Island—*CBS-TV, Sunday, November 4, 8-11 p.m. ET; Tuesday, November 13, 9-11 p.m. ET; and Wednesday, November 14, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Seven-hour miniseries based on Fred M. Stewart's 1983 best-selling novel about early 20th-century immigrants. Features Faye Dunaway and the late Richard Burton in his final role.

Portrait of America—*WTBS cable superstation, Wednesday, November 7, 8:05-9:05 p.m. ET; rebroadcast Sunday, November 11; Saturday, November 17; and Monday, November 26.* Continuing series spotlights a different state each month. November: Arizona.

Mom's On Strike—*ABC-TV, Wednesday, November 14; check local listings for time.* "After-school Special" dramatizing Stephanie Tolan's novel about a mother who teaches her family a valuable lesson by going on strike.

Breathing Easy—*PBS, Wednesday, November 14, 9-10 p.m. ET.* Combination game show/situation comedy/newscast/variety show encourages teens not to smoke.

Tony Esparza/CBS

Faye Dunaway and the late Richard Burton star in "Ellis Island," a CBS-TV seven-hour miniseries recommended for viewing this month. (See related story on page 17.)

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood—*PBS, Monday through Friday, November 19-23, 11-11:30 a.m. ET.* Week-long spotlight on "food."

An American Portrait—*CBS-TV, Monday through Friday, 8:58-8:59 p.m. ET.* One-minute specials celebrate the accomplishments of lesser-known Americans.

Heritage: Civilization and the Jews—*PBS; check local listings for dates and times.* Dramatic documentary series about Jewish history. High school teachers' guide available from WNET-TV Education Division, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019.

Reason To Live—*NBC-TV; check local listings for dates and times.* Drama about a teenage son who helps his father cope with severe depression. Ricky Schroeder and Peter Fonda star.

The Sun Also Rises—*NBC-TV, early December (check local listings).* Four-hour, two-night miniseries dramatizes Ernest Hemingway's classic novel.

BOOK BEAT

Can Top-Notch Teaching Be Taught?

Do we need yet another book about teaching? Of course, if it enlightens, inspires, or informs a profession that asks as many questions as it answers.

In *Artistry in Teaching*, University of Illinois education professor Louis Rubin explores a question he considers previously neglected: what characteristics are common to superior teachers, and can ordinary teachers acquire them? Rubin brings to this task 37 years of broad educational experience—as teacher, teacher educator, administrator, and consultant.

The teachers he designates as superior are the ones whose classes are exciting and to whom students react with delight. They are "artist teachers," he says, people who are inventive, flexible, have high expectations for themselves and their students, believe in what they're doing, and are extraordinarily perceptive. They rely more on intuitive than linear thinking, he notes. Their intuition is sharpened by experience that enables them to make countless daily teaching decisions—quickly and usually correctly.

Above all, says Rubin, these teachers "operate with exceptional expediency... extended by 'pedagogical greed'—the profound desire to teach as much as possible."

ARTISTRY IN TEACHING

by Louis Rubin

(Random House. 192 pp. Paperback, tentatively $7.95.)

Teachers exhibiting most or all of Rubin's virtues are unusual. He spares no one in speculating why: "Too often, training is reduced to trivial mechanics; the schools tolerate mediocrity; creative imagination is fettered by bureaucratic trappings; and misguided research takes us in the wrong direction."

He also admits that factors beyond the teacher's control often make "the capacity to compensate for unseen difficulties...a significant benchmark of excellence."

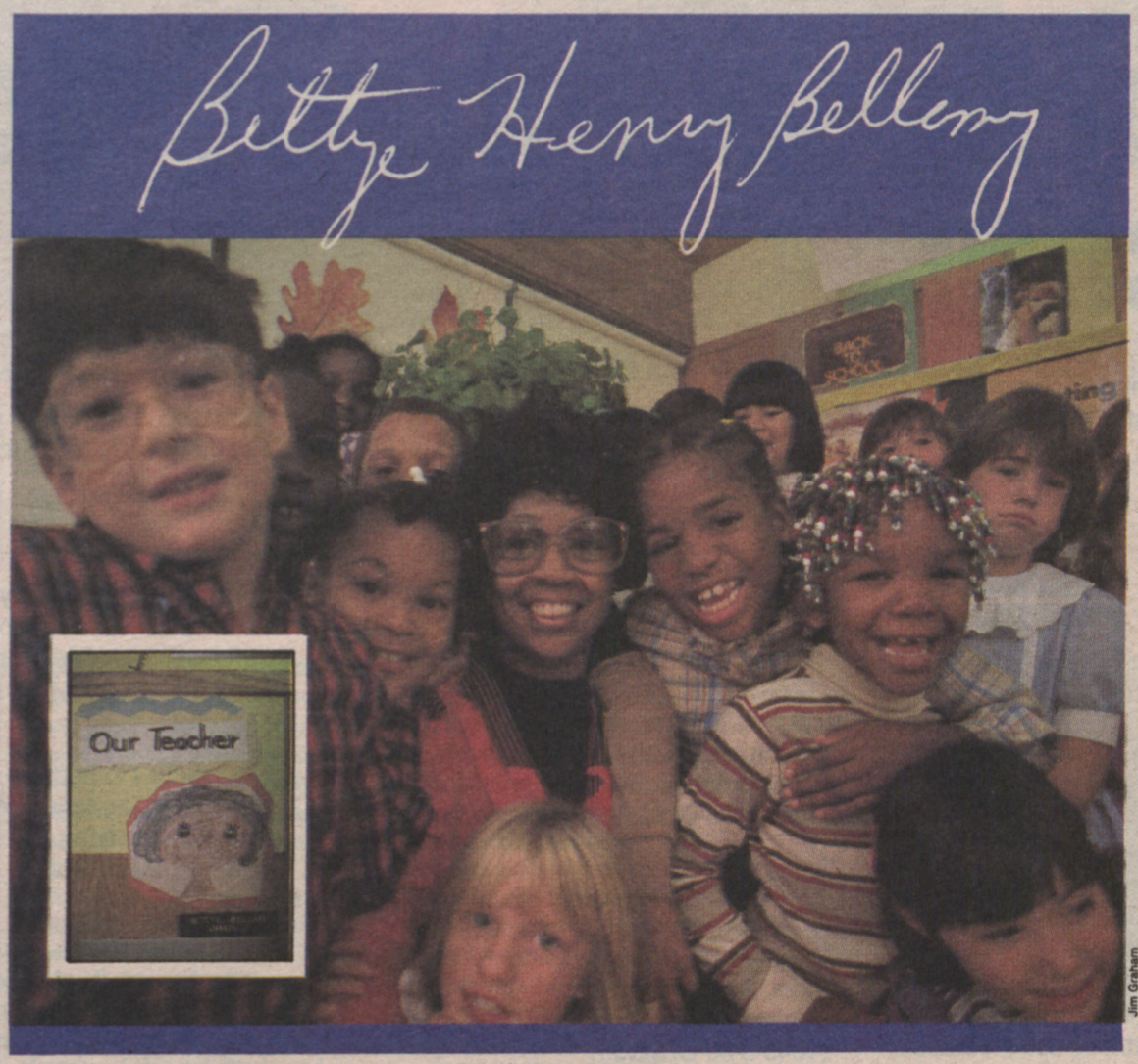
For four years, Rubin conducted an in-service project hoping "to find out whether teachers could become conscious of their own productive powers" and "increase artistry." He avoided prescriptions and encouraged them to create their own solutions to teaching dilemmas.

Unfortunately, despite interesting examples of individual teacher growth, the section of the book that explains this project and its results seems diffuse and inconclusive.

Rubin's eloquent portrayal of teaching at its best should certainly inspire others to "hunger for high accomplishment." I suspect, however, that to satisfy this hunger most teachers will want more help than this book provides.

Reviewed by Winifred Vogt, English teacher, Bellows Falls (Vermont) Middle School.

Meet:



She Smiles from the Heart

Some people may find teaching second grade an exhausting job, but Bettye Henry Bellamy isn't one of them. As she started her 24th consecutive year of long days—and many evenings—among seven-year-olds, one of her colleagues at Fairview Elementary School in Dover, Del., remarked, "I wish the Association could bottle her energy and sell it."

NEA Today *staff writer Jane Power recently talked to Bellamy about how she keeps her enthusiasm.*

Doesn't every year seem a lot like the one before?
Every year is fantastic. The motto on my classroom door is "We're making tomorrow." How could I ever get tired of that?

How do you prepare for a fantastic year?
Our teacher center is open all summer, and my 22-year-old daughter and I go once a week. With the equipment there we can make all the decorations for my classroom. That way, when the children come in on the first day of school, the place is cheery and inviting.

Then, the night before school opens, I call every child at home. That makes a strong impression. When they come to school the next day, they're excited because they've already talked to me on the phone. And they're more relaxed—they're not meeting a total stranger.

The ones who've come up from our first grade already know me, because I visit the first grade room from time to time and say, "I'm just checking on your work—you're going to be in my class next year." They sit up straighter when I come in the door.

Last year's first grade class had more discipline problems than usual, so I put in a lot of time studying at the teacher center to get ready for them. I've got a lot of "carrots"—certificates for good behavior and stickers for good manners. At the end of each day, I let the class decide if they deserve good manners stickers.

Have children changed much since you started teaching?
They're very different from 20 years ago—*so* sophisticated. Every day I get to school at 7:30—you have to stay a whole step ahead of these children, not half a step ahead of them.

Today's students seem to take a lot more initiative than students 10 or 15 years ago. Last year, for example, I was making a scrapbook of all the things the class was doing. One of the children started making one too, and it really caught on. I finally asked the mother who acts as our class secretary to send a letter suggesting that each family send in a blank scrapbook. That was it: every child had a full scrapbook by the end of the year—a sort of running diary of their work.

We do a lot to give the class a family feeling. I think even today's more sophisticated kids need that. We make each other birthday cards, for example. And every morning we choose someone in the school to make happy. Maybe we thank the custodian for the shiny floors or the cafeteria worker for a special lunch, or somebody who found a purse and returned it.

It sounds as though you encourage the kids to reach outside the classroom.
And outside the school. For almost a year now, my class has had an article in the local paper—the *Dover Sentinel*—every week. I suggest a topic, and the children write their own thoughts. They're very creative. That article is selling more newspapers—the grandparents can't wait to read it. And the community seems to enjoy it.

For several years now we've begun every morning with a dictation drill. We write the daily news—"Today is Monday. It is sunny. Johnny is absent." At the beginning, they make five or six mistakes a day, but by the end of the year they're close to perfect. Last year I could see the newspaper column getting better as the children practiced.

Each September we form a pen pal club with nearby schools. I learn a lot from my students' letters. Often I'm surprised at how well they can express their thoughts.

Do people in the community help out your class?
They certainly do, and it makes a big difference. Several years ago, a police officer gave me 30 police shirts for the children to use as smocks when they paint. We're still using them.

How do you involve parents?
At the beginning of the year I phone each family and ask how they can help with the class. Who plays the piano? Who can make costumes? Who can type? The first person I find who types becomes the class secretary.

We send out a schedule of activities—maybe we'll need help in building models for social studies or people to take the class to the skating rink.

Sometime between the beginning of school and Parents Night in November, I have a parent from each family come to school for lunch—one or two a week. It only costs me about $25 for all of them, and it's worth it. I have them fill out a form about their approach to teaching and disciplining the child, and I explain my approach in return. We work together as partners.

Many of the parents who don't work outside the home volunteer to help out. So I'll ask a mother to come in and tutor one of the children. Last year about 10 of the parents were at home—way more than usual—so I had three room mothers. They help me take the children out into the community—to museums, the fire department, the police station, the animal shelter.

On the other hand, a lot of the parents do hold down jobs, so we schedule the class plays for Saturdays or evenings. In June, the class and a lot of the parents go on a picnic at the Philadelphia Zoo.

When you talk about "parents" helping you, does that usually mean mothers?
It used to. But about five years ago, I had 22 boys and four girls in the class—and 12 of the boys were discipline problems. That was the year I really started involving fathers.

Last June, 17 fathers went on the trip to the zoo, so you could say they've come a long way.

Lots of my students are reared by their grandparents, so each school year we take time out to honor grandparents.

Have you ever taught anything but second grade?
When I graduated from Delaware State College, the principal of the high school I had gone to in Middletown asked me to come back for a year and teach special ed so I could be a role model for the kids.

I thought I wasn't prepared, but I was. I taught them how to cook and write checks and survive, and they taught me how to make potholders and how to melt records to make ashtrays. Most of all they taught me how to smile from the heart.

Do you find time these days to do anything besides work with your second graders?
Oh, yes. This summer for two weeks I had five creative arts classes for teenagers at vacation Bible school.

Last year I put on two plays with the teenagers at the church and then took them all roller skating as a thank-you for coming to rehearsals. I do some of the same things for them as for my second graders—bringing them popcorn, for example.

I also love to travel, and I enjoy writing poetry. And I keep in pretty close touch with my mother and dad.

Do they live near you?
They're about 20 miles away. They've been married 50 years, and I'm so thankful I still have them. They come to the programs I put on at school, and I always introduce them.

They made a lot of sacrifices to send me to college. My dad was a construction worker, and my mom worked at home. They really struggled, but I didn't understand until later just how hard things were for them while I was away at college. They're the world's greatest.

How long will you go on teaching second grade?
In another six years I could retire, but if my health holds out, I don't want to stop. And when I do retire, I'd like to be a volunteer and help new teachers.

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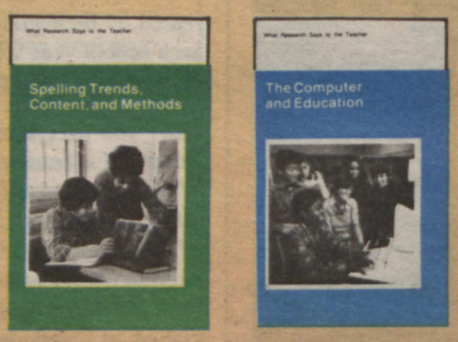

The Computer and Education provides useful guidelines for teachers regarding computer uses in instruction. Focuses on computers and Present Availability and Use; Classroom Applications; Major Curriculum Areas; Exceptional Children; Attitude and Motivation; Future Issues and Concerns.
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Spelling Trends, Content, and Methods presents the most recent research findings about the nature of spelling, its place in the curriculum, latest developments, and trends for the future. Practical classroom application of the research findings is provided through numerous examples.
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Questioning Skills for Teachers concentrates on the impact of questioning techniques on student thinking, achievements, and attitudes, including questioning strategies and approaches for analyzing classroom questions.
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Motivation provides accurate, reliable information teachers need to move forward in changing the classroom climate in this succinct, comprehensive, up-to-date book.
(1042-6-10-D) **$2.50.**

Writing in the Content Areas offers an overview of the historical position of writing skills in their relation to the total curriculum and includes ideas for teachers to help their students become better, clearer writers in daily classroom work.
(1060-4-00-D) **$2.50.**

Parent-Teacher Conferencing examines the resources about parent-teacher conferences and suggests effective ways for teachers to improve their communications with parents and involve them in the educational development of their children.
(1057-4-00-D) **$2.50.**

Teaching Styles as Related to Student Achievement, concentrates on Feedback, Questions, Structuring Activities, Clarity, Task-Oriented Teaching, Classroom Reward Structures, and Student Perceptions of Classroom Climate.
(1049-3-00-D) **$2.50.**

The Newspaper in the Classroom provides suggestions for utilizing newspapers in the classroom as a motivation device, and also as a subject of study.
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Stress and the Classroom Teacher focuses on the nature of stress and effects it has and offers numerous alternatives for application in and out of the classroom.
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Behavior Modification surveys the literature and discusses ways in which disruptive behavior may be identified, monitored, reported, and modified.
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Creativity in the Classroom concentrates on the area of creativity as related to methods, curriculum, identification and assessment, and patterns of development.
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Nonverbal Communication gives teachers techniques to become better "listeners" and "senders" as a method of improving classroom instruction.
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Cooperative Learning: Student Teams tells teachers how to implement the most effective results of project groups, laboratory groups, and discussion groups into a student-student/student-teacher approach across the curriculum and grade levels.
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People

Helen Morin

As if first-day-of-school confusion weren't bad enough, Athol, Mass., kindergarten teacher **Joann Deacon** feared she was suffering from a bad case of double vision this year.

Among her 34 young charges at the Ellen Bigelow School were three sets of identical twins. Not only did each pair dress alike, their last names all began with C—and there were two Melissas among the group.

To keep the look-alikes straight, Deacon tried fashioning cardboard letters for the youngsters to wear. But instead they put them in their mouths until the letters became indistinguishable.

So getting the names right has become something of a game for the class. If Deacon gets a twin's name wrong, the child will playfully answer by calling her by the name of her aide.

Meanwhile, there's yet *another* set of identical twins scheduled for Deacon's class. They missed the opening of school due to illness.

Mike Lydick

"Scoops and scoops...sweet round scoops of velvety smooth sweet cream slide over your tongue, tingling with taste sensations of vanilla beans, dutch chocolate, espresso coffee and fresh strawberries...you can almost *taste* it."

So begins a 28-page booklet *Scoops: A Guide to the Best Homemade Ice Cream in Connecticut*, researched, written, and published by four Association members: **Kathy** and **Gary Horton** (*right*) and **Paula** and **Dan Coughlin** (*center*). All teach at the Mansfield (Conn.) Middle School except Gary, who teaches at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School in Coventry.

As they researched the best ice cream spots, they judged creaminess and subtlety of flavors. Their booklet profiles 16 shops.

When the manuscript was finished and ready for publication, the two couples asked Mansfield colleague **Shirlee Sheathelm** (*left*), an art teacher, to illustrate the book and help with technical decisions.

Some of those decisions, however, were a cinch. Color for the cover and text ink? Chocolate brown, of course.

Mark Peterson

Have you ever thought your students might want to send you to outer space? Delano (Minn.) Middle School teacher **Rick Haley** is sure his students would like to see him in orbit—because they're doing everything possible to get him there.

Haley's students—and former students—are campaigning to have him become America's first nontechnical person to go into space.

Haley, who teaches sixth grade, often talks with his students about becoming an astronaut, something he's thought about since childhood. Last summer he took a course in aerospace education and technology and visited Cape Canaveral in Florida. There he acquired a NASA T-shirt and hat, which he often wears to class.

So when President Reagan announced recently that he'd like to see a teacher become the first civilian in space, the students started their campaign—writing letters to the President, members of Congress, and NASA, holding a "Haley" pep rally at the first football game this school year, and gathering signatures on a petition. NASA says some 2,500 teachers have applied to ride the space shuttle.

"A visit to space would fulfill a lifelong dream," Haley says, "but nothing can take the place of my relationship with my students and my teaching career."

The first thing they want to know is "what's a nice schoolteacher like you doing in a gambling casino?"

When Pleasantville, N.J., Chapter 1 teacher and Association activist **Katherine McEachern** explains that she's a part-time blackjack dealer in Del Webb's Claridge Casino and Hotel in Atlantic City, all bets are off as to the reaction she'll get.

"One of the most interesting things about this job is the way people react when they find I work nights as a dealer," McEachern laughs. She devotes three or four nights a week to her second career, working from about 7 p.m. to 2 or 3 a.m. Her salary, including tips, averages about $11.50 an hour.

This active single parent believes her 20-year moonlighting career took a turn for the better when she left the pink-collar ghetto and trained to deal blackjack three years ago.

"Unlike part-time jobs for men, the jobs available to women simply don't pay well. The salary and working conditions of a blackjack dealer are much better than I experienced as a waitress or cashier," McEachern notes.

So anxious was she to get a foothold in her new career that she was instrumental in recruiting some 20 other teachers needed to qualify for a group rate on the six-week training program.

She finds that after people get over their surprise at her unusual part-time job, they invariably have another question:

"How do I win?"

Gregg Kohl

Like most people who came of age during the Depression, Ysleta, Texas, third grade teacher **Alice Brumley** knows—*really* knows—that "nobody appreciates what they have today."

Back this fall for her fiftieth year of teaching—her thirtieth at Ysleta Elementary—Brumley remembers her first year, in nearby El Paso: "The Depression was on, and the $60 a month we new teachers received was $40 less than new teachers had been getting—but better, of course, than the scrip some districts paid their teachers with." Those were the years when fringe benefits consisted of burial insurance available at a discount.

Extolling the value of Association membership, this longtime member recalls: "In the 1930's there were no pensions, and I knew many fine, unmarried teachers who had no choice when they retired but to go to what was really nothing more than a poorhouse."

After 20 years in the El Paso school district and 30 more in Ysleta, what are Brumley's plans for next year?

"Since my husband will be reading this," she chuckles, "I'd better say 'to retire.'"

RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

SOCIAL STUDIES

Mexico: Neighbor in Transition. Peter H. Smith. An update by a specialist on Mexican economic and political developments. Headline Series No. 267. 80 pp. $3 (individuals must prepay; institutions may be billed for orders exceeding $6). Quantity discounts are available as are subscriptions to the Series (five issues per year). Foreign Policy Association, 205 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016.

TEACHING ABROAD

Educators' Passport to International Jobs: How To Find and Enjoy Employment Abroad. Rebecca Anthony and Gerald Roe. Tells how to research and interview potential overseas employers, pack, move, cope with culture shock, then line up a job in the U.S. for your return. 181 pp. $9.95 in bookstores or for $1.25 more by mail from Peterson's Guides, P.O. Box 2123, Princeton, NJ 08540.

COMPUTERS IN EDUCATION

School Uses of Microcomputers. A series of six newsletters (April 1983—Sept. 1984) that reports results of the National Survey of School Uses of Microcomputers, directed by Henry Jay Becker. Price for the full series, $3, prepaid by check to the Johns Hopkins University. Publications Office, Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University, 3505 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218.

THE HOLOCAUST

Don't Fence Me In. Barry Spanjaard. A wartime memoir written in 1946 at age 16 by the only known U.S.-born survivor of Nazi concentration camps. 216 pp. School prices: 1-9 copies, $6.50 each; class sets of 25 or more copies, $5.50 each. Teacher's Guide, 26 pp., $2 (free with class set). Prices include shipping. B&B Publishing, P.O. Box 165, Saugus, CA 91350.

WRITING

The Grammarian; The Punctuator; The Speller; The Writer. Cardboard "rule wheels" designed to provide quick reference to the canons of writing and examples of their use. Each wheel is encased in a clear plastic cover that fits a three-ring binder. Price per wheel, $4.95, plus $2.50 shipping and handling. Quantity discounts available. Prepay by check or charge to VISA or MasterCard (give account number and expiration date). Calif. residents add 6 percent sales tax. University Press of California, 1000 N. Coast Hwy., Suite 3, Laguna Beach, CA 92651.

Reducing Writing Apprehension. Michael W. Smith. Shows teachers how *not* to encourage writing apprehension in their students, plus how to help students already afflicted to overcome the malady. 40 pp. $5.75. Stock no. 39671. ERIC/National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.

CIVIC EDUCATION

Participation, a series of curriculum guides to encourage reasoned political action by students. Includes ***Taking Part*** (elementary), 64 pp.; ***Making History*** (secondary social studies), 90 pp.; ***Investigations: Toxic Waste*** (secondary science), 68 pp. $6 each, plus $2 postage. Boston Area Educators for Social Responsibility, 11 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

TEACHER TRAINING

Films for Education and Teacher Training. Describes more than 650 films and videotapes about education that are available for rental. 1984 edition, 84 pp. Free. The Pennsylvania State University, Audio-Visual Services, Special Services Bldg., University Park, PA 16802.

SPELLING

Spelling Trends, Contents, and Methods. Ruel A. Allred. This new addition to NEA's *What Research Says to the Teacher* series shows how to help students spell better. 32 pp. Stock no. 1062-0-00-D. $2.50. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516 (or order via the postage-paid reply envelope following page 112 in the 1984-85 *Today's Education* annual).

The "Free or Inexpensive" feature is published as a service to readers. Items listed are selected by the editors at their discretion from review copies submitted by publishers. Since this column is editorial matter rather than advertising, there is no charge for listings.

How To Cut Your Grading Time From Hours To Minutes.

It took 20 years to develop, but finally there's a tool to perform your tedious and tiresome grading computations for you. It's the GRADEMATIC 100™ teacher's calculator, and it is, quite simply, the time-saving answer to grading for today's busy teacher.

Invented by Michigan educator John Brittan, the GRADEMATIC 100™ reduces to minutes the grading computations which take hours by hand or with a conventional calculator.

And less time spent grading means more time to prepare your classes, work with your students—and spend doing the things you like to do!

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But most of all, the GRADEMATIC is easy to use. The complex grading formulas— which now take you so long by hand— are put in for you. No complex keystrokes to enter. No formulas to remember.

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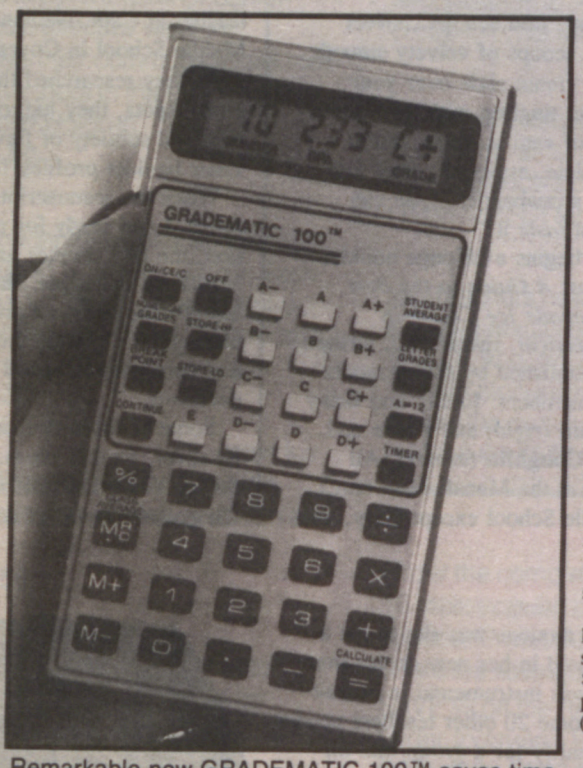
"Tremendous. After ordering and using the GRADEMATIC 100 at school... 12 more teachers ordered one for themselves. Love mine." **Mary Lou Taylor, South Spencer School, Rockport, Ind.**

"I moved from 30 hours per grading period (to average student grades) to less than 10 hours using this system." **Sherrie D. Morritz, Grandview Jr. High School, Phoenix, Arizona.**

"I can't believe the time I save with this wonderful invention! It's so easy even my students can use it to average their grades." **Gary Geivet, Santiago Elementary, Santa Ana, California.**

"In the 10 years I have taught, this is one of the most important tools I have (owned). I recently computed 155 grades in 20 minutes—a usual 2-hour chore." **Beverly Anne Ledbetter, Pasco Jr. High School Dade City, Florida**



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A literal grading survival kit, the GRADEMATIC 100™ includes a 2-week MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE, 1-Year Warranty, 28-page easy-to-follow owner's manual, long-life replaceable batteries —which normally last over 1,000 hours!—, and sturdy vinyl carrying case (brown).

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National Park Service, Statue of Liberty National Monument

IN THE CLASSROOM

Lady Liberty's Facelift Draws Student Support, Rejuvenates Curriculum

In 1883, newspaper magnate Joseph Pulitzer scolded New York's millionaires for haggling over how much money they'd put up to build a pedestal for a monument soon to arrive in New York Harbor as a gift from the people of France.

Pulitzer's *New York World* took up the monument's cause, and in two years, the American people—schoolchildren and ordinary citizens as well as millionaires—raised nearly $300,000 to construct a base for the giant statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World."

Now, 100 years later, the private sector is once again raising funds for that monument, which came to be known as the "Statue of Liberty." This time around, the money will go for restoration. Among other things, the Lady who stands on Liberty (formerly Bedloe's) Island needs a new torch. Also, the interior metal framework that supports her copper-sheathed exterior needs to be replaced or strengthened. Plus the copper exterior itself needs a chemical bath to stabilize the process of corrosion.

The current campaign will also begin to restore the buildings on nearby Ellis Island, which from 1892 to 1954 served as the East Coast port of entry for more than 17 million immigrants to this country. The restored Ellis Island will be a museum of immigration. One possible display: a computerized data bank from which descendants of the immigrants can learn details of their forebears' arrival.

The official fund-raising body for both landmarks—headed by Chrysler's Lee Iacocca—has already raised $100 million of its target of $230 million.

A stupendous Fourth of July celebration in 1986 will mark the reopening of the Statue of Liberty and of Ellis Island's Great Hall. That's the room through which, 75 years ago, thousands of immigrants passed every day. The Statue's formal rededication will occur on October 28, 1986, exactly 100 years after its original dedication.

Just as they were a century ago, America's students are prominent in the current fundraising drive. NEA Secretary-Treasurer Roxanne Bradshaw serves on the advisory committee for the Liberty Centennial Student Campaign, which has raised more than $1 million so far.

Student contributions come from as far away as Japan. Overseas Education Association member Carol Powell reports that her third graders at the Department of Defense school at Misawa Air Force Base collected more than $200 from their schoolmates for the restoration of Lady Liberty.

Contributions come from schools whose lobbies display replicas of the Statue, some fitted out as tamper-proof banks. Their creators have used every conceivable medium to fashion their statues: papier-mache (Corinne Wright's students at DuPont Senior High School, Hermitage, Tenn.); styrofoam (Aldona Downing, for her third graders in Willington, Conn.), fiberglass (Paul Stille's junior high industrial arts students in East Hanover, N.J.).

Some of the money comes from the sale of used aluminum cans. Last school year Rich Edwards and his colleagues in Idaho's Bonner County Education Association decided to collect a pound of cans for each of the 630 students at their school, Priest River Elementary. They exceeded their goal, amassing 646 pounds, worth nearly $200 for the fund.

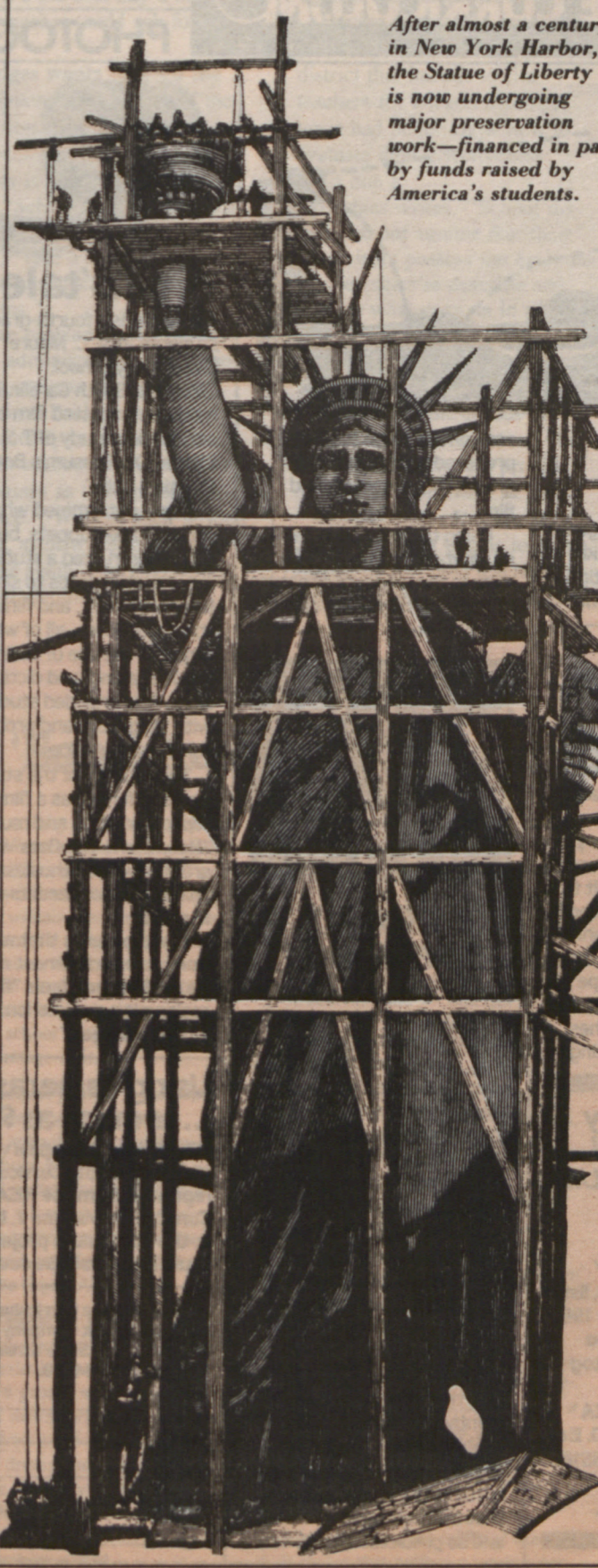
Teachers are finding that the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island are also a curricular gold mine. You teach ancient history? Show how sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi wanted the 151-foot-high sculpture (its 4'6" nose is the height of a typical nine-year-old) to emulate the colossi of the ancient world.

Chemistry? Describe how it's possible to "prepatinize" new copper sheeting and rivets so they'll match the Statue's existing greenish patina.

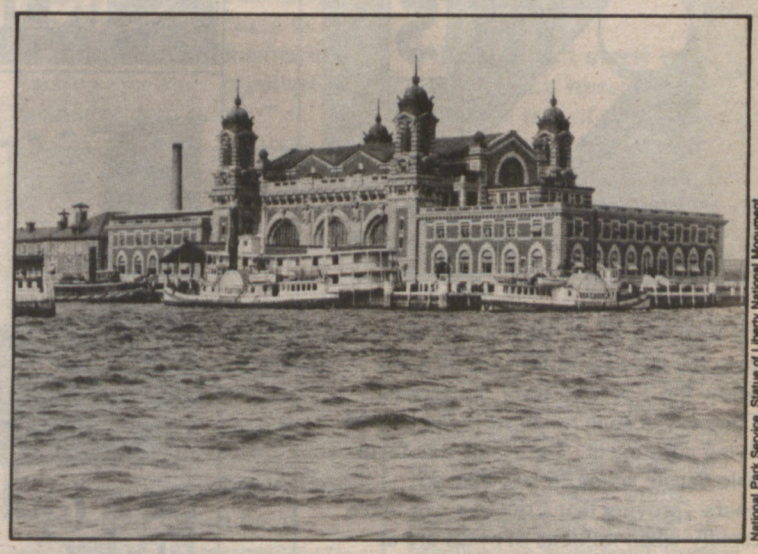
Engineering? Show how Gustave Eiffel's innovative structural design prefigured the curtain wall techniques that made skyscrapers possible.

American history? Explain how Bartholdi's decision to site the Statue so that ship passengers entering New York Harbor would get the best view transformed the monument from a mere symbol of Franco-American friendship (it still is that, of course) to a universal symbol of individual freedom and opportunity.

—Nancy R. Needham



After almost a century in New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty is now undergoing major preservation work—financed in part by funds raised by America's students.



National Park Service, Statue of Liberty National Monument

More than 17 million immigrants entered the United States through Ellis Island. Their 100 million descendants account for 40 percent of today's U.S. population.

Rick Mansfield

Student leaders at DuPont Senior High in Hermitage, Tenn., and their faculty advisor Corinne Wright lead a school-wide Save Our Statue project.

Getting Involved

► Send contribution checks to Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 1986, New York, NY 10018.

► For historical information and fund-raising ideas, get the free 32-page *Liberty Centennial Student Manual* from Student Campaign, Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island Foundation, 101 Park Ave., New York, NY 10178.

For a free (and copyable) 13-min. film/videotape, write Joan Wise at the same address, specifying whether you want 16mm film or ¾" or ½" videotape, when you'll need it, and when you'll return it.

► Order the New York City Schools/*New York Daily News* teaching kits entitled *Liberty Enlightening the World* (specify elementary or secondary edition). Send a check for $1 (third class mail) or $3 (first class mail) to Curriculum Guides, Box 4300F, Blair, NE 68009. Make check payable to *Curriculum Guide*.

► Visit Liberty Island. The Statue's interior and pedestal are closed until July 4, 1986. But visitor facilities and the American Museum of Immigration, which has been on the island since 1972, are open. At press time, Liberty Island is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday. The National Park Service offers films and illustrated talks about both the Statue and Ellis Island. Outside walking tours may be available in good weather. Teachers interested in arranging a group visit should telephone the National Park Service information desk on the island, at 212/732-1236, to make a tour reservation and to obtain information about ferry service.

► Plan now to visit Ellis Island when it reopens—with renovation of the Great Hall completed—in time for the Fourth of July 1986.

YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

The Politics of Social Security

America's older citizens vote in much higher percentages than any other age group. More and more, voting retirees are setting the political agenda.

That fact isn't lost on the politicians. Even President Reagan has gotten the message.

After four long years of real and threatened attacks on Social Security, the Administration has decided not to further raise the ire of retirees in an election year. The result is congressional approval of a White House call for a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in Social Security benefits that will go into effect in January 1985.

Social Security COLAs are triggered when the cost of living increases more than 3 percent during one fiscal year. The President didn't wait for the final figures to come in. Fearing predictions that

the final quarter of fiscal year 1984 would keep the increase in the cost of living below the 3 percent level, he pressed Congress in June to consider the cost-of-living adjustment. The result was favorable Senate action in less than 48 hours—proving that Congress can move rapidly when millions of votes are at stake.

The COLA will mean a 2.9 percent increase in benefits for 36 million Social Security recipients and four million Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries.

Don't Take No for an Answer

What happens if you get short-changed on the benefits you think you have coming from Social Security—or rejected altogether?

There's an appeals process that every Social Security recipient or would-be recipient should be aware of. The process also covers Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicare.

- ► Your appeal must be in writing.
- ► You must file your appeal within specified time frames—usually, 60 days from the day you were first notified of the decision you wish to appeal.
- ► You may file your appeal at any Social Security office.
- ► You may have a person of your choice represent you at any stage of the appeal process.
- ► You may submit additional evidence during the appeal process.

The four basic steps in the appeals process include a reconsideration, a hearing, a review by the Appeals Council in Washington, D.C., and legal action in a federal district court.

Reconsideration means having your case reviewed by someone other than the Social Security official who made the decision you're appealing. The hearing is a face-to-face presentation before an administrative law judge of the Social Security Administration's Office of Hearings and Appeals.

Your local Social Security office should have leaflets describing the requirements for appealing decisions under the Social Security, SSI, and Medicare programs. Or you may write the Social Security Administration, Office of Information, Room 4-J-10 West High Rise, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.

Voices of Experience

Until we make our own personal decision to retire, we tend to think of retirement in terms of stereotypes.

At one extreme is the "golden years" ideal—a time of harvesting the fruits of our labors. At the opposite end of the spectrum are visions of wrinkles, paltry incomes, and eroding intellects.

Retirement is much more complicated than either of those pictures, of course. That's why you should begin early consideration of retirement plans, according to 1,500 school employees who have already retired.

Their message comes through loudly in *Voices of Experience: 1,500 Retired People Talk About Retirement*. The book is the result of a random survey conducted by the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF), which manages almost 900,000 school employees' retirement benefits.

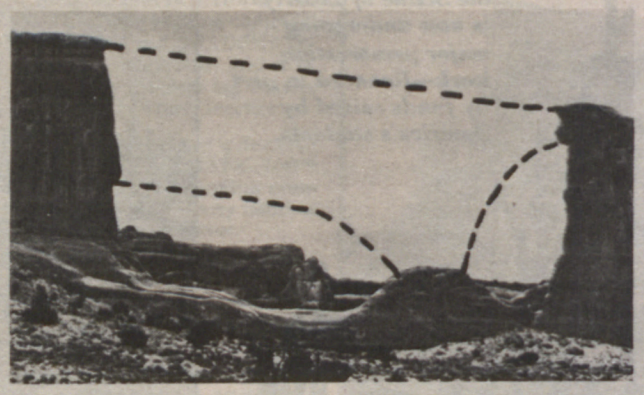
Voices is much more than a staid listing of statistics. It's a poignant look at key questions regarding retirement—with large doses of advice and direct quotes from the 1,500 participants on such issues as the pros and cons of pre-retirement counseling, early vs. late retirement, second careers, money, health care, and much more.

For your copy, send $3 to TIAA-CREF, Educational Research, 730 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

—Eddy Gattis

CAMERAS IN THE CURRICULUM

NEA/KODAK PROGRAM SHOWS YOU WAYS TO TEACH WITH PHOTOGRAPHY.



Be a fault-finder.*

Want students to grasp geology? Try a do-it-yourself kit that combines the investigation of land formations with creative communication—through photography.

Science teachers Bernard Radcliffe and Daniel Shepardson devised a module for students at Grand County Middle School, Moab, Utah, where "the topography of the land becomes the teacher."

Here's the technique—plan a field trip for student-parent teams. Then provide a kit to guide their study and record their findings photographically. Kit contains a cassette player, a prerecorded tape directing the "geologists" to specific formations (arches, faults, etc), manuals listing assignments and teacher-prepared photos and diagrams, plus a camera and film.

Using this approach, each student-parent team experiences the wonders of nature in a unique way—and records it in pictures.

This bears repeating.*

One, two, three bear books—a honey of a way to generate enthusiasm for reading. Shirl Walquist's kindergarten pupils at Maple Grove School, Metropolis, Illinois, are able to read without realizing it, using this approach.

Together, teacher and students made three large-print books, each with photos of the children wearing bear ears and noses. Related subject matter, use of pictures of familiar faces, and repetitious and/or rhyming captions made the books so predictable that they became instantly readable.

Shirl believes that "using photography is a perfect way to make print so meaningful that children want to read it, and so predictable, they can."

A cats'tale.

Becky Lewis's fourth-grade students at A. C. Moore Elementary School, Columbia, South Carolina, made an animated film to enrich their study of T. S. Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats."

Pupils determined what to shoot, made puppets, built sets, constructed a studio, manipulated props to simulate movement, and filmed the sequences—all of which required the use of their math, reading, and dictionary skills. And provided students with teamwork and problem-solving experiences.

The product of the students' efforts was a film with taped narration and music. "Here Come The Cats" was greeted with enthusiasm by an audience of parents and friends.

Lewis believes that animation can enrich almost any curriculum, and feels "filmmaking is a process loaded with challenges."

Community search.

It's not easy to think in one language and express those thoughts in another. But teachers Bruce Hucko and Paul Pitts have simplified the process for fifth- to seventh-graders at Montezuma Creek Elementary School, Montezuma, Utah.

Their project combined photography and language arts to increase students' communication skills and broaden their regard for their Indian heritage.

Students worked in teams, exploring their community on the Navajo Reservation. They photographed their parents at work, and produced photo essays about sites of present-day, historical, or mythological significance. Finished pieces were mounted and displayed or bound into a comprehensive "Community Search" book.

America's Storyteller Kodak

Order your copy of *CAMERAS IN THE CURRICULUM*, Volume 1.

This 144-page volume explains how the NEA/Kodak program works, lists the 130 projects of the 1982 winners, and shows you many ways to use photography in teaching.

For a copy, write: NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. Enclose your check or money order for $5.95.

Using cameras in the curriculum pays ...as much as $1500!

*These two examples were top-prize winners in the 1982/83 "Cameras in the Curriculum" NEA/Kodak contest, and were reprinted from the *NEA/Kodak 1982-83 Cameras in the Curriculum, Volume 1*, by permission of Kodak. More cameras-in-the-curriculum projects will win cash awards this year! One could be yours! Use coupon to receive program/contest rules.

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RESEARCH CLUES

Who's Calling Whom Incompetent?

by Joe Schneider

Every once in a while the research community produces a document that becomes must reading for teachers. Such a publication came off the presses this past summer. It's called *Managing the Incompetent Teacher*. Teachers ought to read it—if for no other reason than because their principals are.

Stanford University Professor Edwin M. Bridges wrote the book under contract with the National Institute of Education (NIE), the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education. The book wasn't intended to be part of the Reagan Administration's "school reform" thrust. But NIE officials, quick to recognize the book's apparent relevance to the current reform movement, haven't been shy about promoting it as a potential bestseller.

The book is a how-to guide to identifying, remediating, and dismissing incompetent teachers. Professor Bridges frankly advises school administrators to adopt an aggressive approach to dealing with mediocre teacher performance.

Now, before you yell foul and vow to lobby against federal research funds, you really ought to read the professor's book. It's the best ally a competent teacher could ask for.

Joe Schneider is executive director of the Council for Educational Development and Research, Washington, D.C. Any opinions expressed here are strictly his own.

Bridges wants to weed the incompetent teachers out of the profession. But his research convinces him that dismissing teachers is one tough assignment. "School districts that wish to confront this challenge," he writes, "face a formidable array of legal, technical, and human problems."

These problems exist because school administrators don't know how to evaluate the teaching profession, Bridges suggests. Consequently, many districts function without any criteria for what passes as "competent performance." Without such written criteria, as districts learn time and time again, courts generally side with dismissed teachers against their employers.

Having reasonable criteria in place is only the first step. A district that intends to fire teachers for alleged incompetence had better know how to evaluate their effectiveness. Most don't.

Bridges writes, "School districts cannot assume that their supervisors possess the essential competencies to describe and analyze what goes on in a teacher's classroom in an unbiased fashion." Nor are the administrators able to diagnose and document the causes of performance, or to counsel the less able teachers and provide remediation for them, he adds.

Consequently, Bridges says, before a district begins to move against its less able teachers, it better upgrade the skills of their supervisors. Once that's done, he suggests, "Hold the supervisors accountable for the quality of their teachers' performance."

What Bridges doesn't say, though other researchers have, is that most principals are poor instructional leaders. And they know it. Most principals, when they get to the page where Bridges says they ought to be held accountable for teachers' performance, will read no further.

Bridges' book, in other words, poses less threat to teachers than it does to their administrators. Most school districts that actually implement his eight-point strategy for dealing with incompetent teachers will have to start by dealing with incompetent administrators.

That eight-point strategy begins with the superintendents—who, Bridges says, "have to demonstrate their commitment to teaching excellence in collective bargaining negotiations."

Want To Read the Book?

Copies of Edwin Bridges' *Managing the Incompetent Teacher*, written with the assistance of Barry Groves, can be ordered for $4.25 from the Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305.

Second, the district has to adopt and publish reasonable criteria for evaluating teachers. Third, the district has to establish sound procedures for determining whether or not teachers satisfy the criteria.

Fourth, the district has to provide reasonable time for teachers to improve. Bridges points out that a teacher's unsatisfactory performance "may stem from shortcomings of the principal, weaknesses of the school district, or any number of outside influences."

Fifth, the district has to ensure that the supervisors have the necessary competence to evaluate teachers. Sixth, these supervisors then must be given the necessary resources to conduct such evaluations.

Seventh—and here's the bugaboo for supervisors—Bridges says the district must hold them responsible for the quality of their teachers' performance.

Finally, prior to the actual dismissal of any teachers, the district must provide them with a fair hearing.

Bridges isn't overly optimistic that his research will produce a rash of incompetent-teacher dismissals. But that doesn't upset him. Frankly, he believes the incompetency label is a bad rap for the vast majority of teachers. Even among the incompetent, he believes more need remediation than dismissal.

But he also points out that for the past 13 years, the Gallup polls have identified teacher incompetence as one of the public schools' biggest problems. Something, in other words, needs to be done. Bridges has produced an eight-point strategy as one possible solution.

The question is, do school administrators have the moxie to implement it?

YOU AND THE LAW

What Will the New 'Equal Access' Law Mean for Your School?

The Equal Access Act became federal law this past August. Under the Act, public secondary schools may not prohibit student organized religious meetings during noninstructional time if they allow other types of student-initiated meetings.

The law is rather vaguely written, and many Association members have asked about how to implement it. In the absence of any federal regulations, guidelines were developed this fall by representatives of NEA, the American Association of School Administrators, the Baptist Joint Committee, Americans for Democratic Action, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Christian Legal Society, and the National Association of Evangelicals. The following summary of those guidelines should help.

What does the law mean by requiring equal access to a school's "limited open forum"?
If a school permits student groups to meet on its premises for student-initiated activity not directly related to the school curriculum, it thereby creates a "limited open forum" and must treat all such student groups equally, without discriminating on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings. The open forum is "limited" because only the school's own students can take advantage of it.

Must a school provide a limited open forum for its students?
No. The school or local policy-making body has the exclusive authority to determine whether it will have a limited open forum. Allowing curriculum-related student groups will not trigger implementation of the Equal Access Act.

What is meant by noncurriculum-related student groups?
A noncurriculum-related student group is a group or club interested in a subject matter not directly related to the school curriculum. Math, Spanish, drama clubs, and athletic teams are normally curriculum-related. Religious, political, or service clubs are considered noncurriculum-related.

Who determines which groups are curriculum-related?
Local school authorities. However, the definition cannot be arbitrary.

When can noncurriculum-related student groups meet?
Groups can meet during "noninstructional time"— time set aside before or after actual classroom instruction. The constitutionality of equal access for religious clubs during the school day is currently being litigated in the federal courts. The Act is silent on this question.

May a school establish regulations for meetings that take place in its limited open forum?
Yes. Schools retain authority to establish nondiscriminatory rules on time, place, and discipline for student meetings. A written policy is strongly recommended.

Can a school set a minimum number of students necessary to form a noncurriculum-related club?
No. Care must be exercised not to discriminate against numerically small student groups.

What does student-initiated mean?
It means that neither a teacher nor another school employee—nor the school itself—is initiating the meeting. Nonschool persons may not direct, conduct, or control student meetings. Students may seek advice from nonschool persons, however.

May teachers be present during student meetings?
Yes, with limitations. Teachers may be present at religious meetings only in a "nonparticipatory capacity." The Act prohibits school employees from influencing the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity.

May outsiders attend a student meeting?
Yes, if invited by students, unless a school adopts a policy barring all nonschool persons from student clubs.

Can a school employee be required to be present at a student meeting that's contrary to his or her beliefs?
No.

The law prohibits "sponsorship of the meeting by the school, the government, or its agents or employees." What constitutes sponsorship?
School employees may not promote, lead, or participate in noncurriculum-related student meetings. However, the assignment of an employee to monitor a student meeting—even if the employee is paid for the monitoring—does not constitute sponsorship under the Act.

Do school authorities retain disciplinary control?
Yes. But possible disciplinary problems cannot be used as an excuse to bar student groups. For example, a group cannot be barred at one school because a similar group at another school has generated problems.

What about groups that wish to advocate or discuss changes in existing laws?
Students who wish to discuss controversial issues may not be barred.

What about groups other students object to—or "hate groups"?
A student group cannot be denied equal access because its ideas are unpopular. A regulation stating that student groups must be open to all students regardless of race, religion, or national origin could stop so-called hate groups from requesting meeting space. Student groups that are unlawful, or that substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities, can be excluded.

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PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Footing College Costs

No matter how young your children are, it's never too early to start saving for college. Despite skeptics' claims to the contrary, a college degree will remain a prerequisite for almost all the best-paying and most attractive careers. On this page NEA Special Services presents a few strategies for making your children's college education as financially painless as possible.

Finding Financial Aid

As yet there's no single organized, systematic way to get financial aid for college. But there's lots of aid to be had, if you know where and how to look. Experts estimate that as much as *$10 billion* a year is available—some of it going unclaimed. As many as 60 percent of families eligible for financial aid fail to apply, studies at several state colleges reveal.

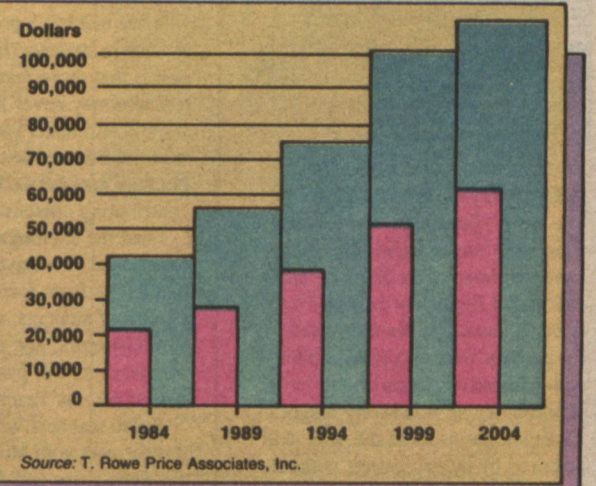
Aid sources include the colleges themselves, the federal, state, and sometimes local governments, private agencies, ROTC, corporations, labor unions, women's organizations, fraternal organizations, veterans organizations, churches, and youth organizations. Not all these sources require your family to show financial need.

For further details, check one of the many reference books available. Two good ones are *The College Cost Book* published by the College Board and *The College Money Book* by Hawes and Brownstone (Bobbs-Merrill).

How Much Will It Take?

Most college educations are funded largely from family savings. How much will you need to stash away for your member of the Class of '95?

Here are projected costs of a typical public and private four-year college education, assuming that college expenses increase by 6 percent annually.



Source: T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc.

Invest Now, Pay Tuition Later

When investing for your children's college education, remember two words: 'safety' and 'time.'

Safe investments offer a sure return. While stocks, real estate, and collectibles may all do well over the long run, they're unsafe in the sense that you may get caught by a bad market just when Sally is ready to start her freshman year. The best investments won't surprise you when college time comes. Examples are money market funds, Treasury notes, and certificates of deposit.

The time to start saving is *early*. A year at MIT costs over $13,000. If you had put away $142 a month in a 5.5 percent passbook account beginning when your 18-year-old was born, you'd have enough by now to finance the entire four years. (If you had gotten a higher rate of return—or chosen a less expensive school—the whole process would be even easier.)

What's your best investment right now? Many financial advisers would say "zero coupon bonds.'' These are bought at a huge discount from their face value, and they pay no interest. For instance, $3,500 might buy a bond worth $10,000 in 1992.

Unfortunately, the Internal Revenue Service will hold you responsible for a portion of the bond's increase in value each year ("imputed income"). You can avoid or minimize this tax bite by putting the zero coupon bonds into an individual retirement account or Clifford trust, or by giving them to your child under the Uniform Gift to Minors Act. Another alternative is to buy zero coupon *municipal* bonds, which are tax-free.

Other Ways To Lighten The Financial Load

Your college-bound youngsters may want to consider these options:

► *Accelerated programs* like the Advanced Placement Program offer bright students the chance to earn college credit while still in high school. Once in college, students can place out of as much as a year through the College Level Examination Program and the Proficiency Examination Program.

► *Co-op work-study programs.* There are more than 1,000 of these programs, which allow students in certain fields to alternate on-campus work with paid employment. For a free booklet, "Undergraduate Programs of Cooperative Education in the United States and Canada," write to the National Commission for Cooperative Education, 360 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02115.

► *Deferred enrollment.* Some colleges will accept students with the understanding that they'll first take a year off to work.

► *Part-time employment.* Remember that working their way through college will be much easier for students in an area with many job prospects.

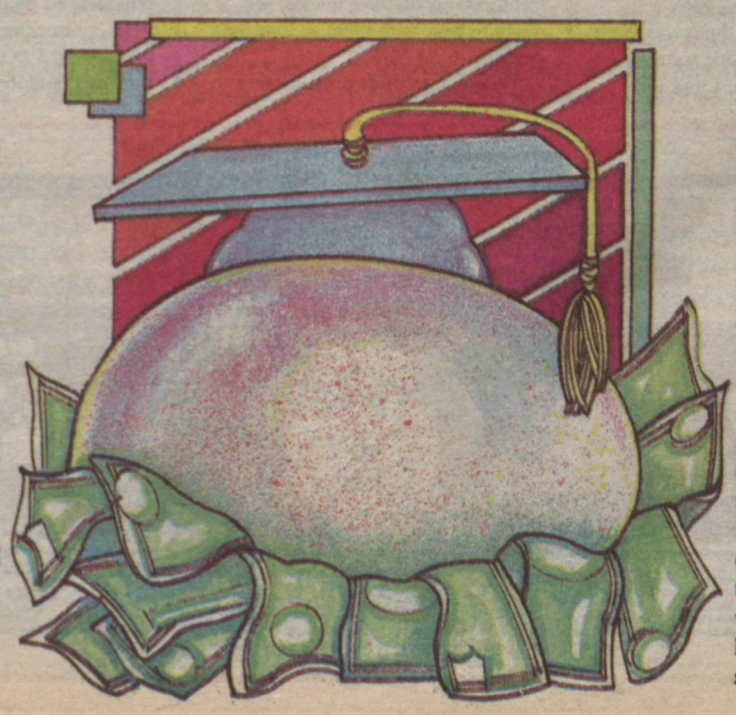
Minimize Taxes As You Incubate Your College Nest Egg

Everyone knows money grows faster if the interest can compound tax-free or at a lower tax rate. Here are four common ways to keep taxes to a minimum while you save for college. Be sure to consult with a tax expert before making a final decision, since each of these methods has its drawbacks.

► *Uniform Gift to Minors Act.* If you give funds to your child, all interest they earn will be taxed at his or her rate, not yours. But beware: Junior may later decide surfing in Australia would be a better way to use the money than going to college!

► *Crown Loans.* The Tax Reform Act of 1984 has ended most of the advantages of these no-interest 'demand loans.' If your loans total $10,000 or more, you now must pay taxes on the interest you could have earned (currently set at 10 percent) and must give your child a comparable interest 'expense'—which will be useless unless your child itemizes tax deductions.

► *Clifford Trusts.* If you place money in a trust with your child as beneficiary, all income it earns will then be taxed at your child's lower rate. The trust must be in place for at least 10 years plus a day; if you remove the money sooner you lose all tax advantages. There are limits to how much you can put in a Clifford trust before paying federal gift taxes. And some states consider college a normal child-support expense and therefore make such a trust invalid. In any event, it's imperative to see a lawyer well versed in tax law. If your trust is set up incorrectly, you could find yourself facing huge amounts of back taxes when you can least afford them.



► *TDAs and IRAs.* Despite the penalties for early withdrawal, tax-deferred annuities and individual retirement accounts may be good college investments if you start early enough. Depending on your particular tax situation, your funds could grow fast enough, tax free, to compensate for the penalties in seven years or less. Of course, if your salary (and tax bracket) should rise dramatically, these advantages may never appear. Plus there are limits to how much you can deposit in these accounts each year, so you may not want to use them for anything other than retirement.

Letters

Anybody Listening?

The word "listening" was missing from NEA's comprehensive *Open Letter to America on Schools, Students, and Tomorrow* in your October issue. Listening is the most used (or perhaps misused) skill in daily communicative efforts and in most classrooms, yet it is rarely taught. Listening seems to be the only skill acquired by human beings without instruction, by magic.

If teachers, writers, editors, and others involved in education continue to ignore the skill of listening, the goal of excellence in education will remain a dream.

Charles H. Swanson
Fairmont, West Virginia

Micros: Where?

Henry Becker and those who quote his study recommending that schools keep their microcomputers in a computer lab ("Research Clues," October) are viewing computers too narrowly—as if they should be reserved for student use.

Teachers have a right to use computers as a tool to assist them in teaching and classroom management. I use the computer daily during my preschool handicapped class to create a letter to the parents detailing the day's program and providing suggestions for home follow-up. In the same 10 to 15 minutes I used to spend writing shorter notes for only one or two students, the computer lets me create longer and more detailed letters for nine parents.

As long as the computer is in the classroom, one child at a time can use it with minimal supervision. It would not be practical to send my students out to a lab for five- or ten-minute segments of drill in math facts, spelling, perception, etc.

The difficulty of transporting elementary classes to and from a central location and the lack of personnel in a small school to supervise in a lab setting are two of the many other arguments I could advance as to why a computer might *not* get more use in a central location.

Marilyn Stryk
Worthington, Minnesota

'Stand Tall'

"Tomorrow's Stars Thank Today's Teachers" in your October issue should give all of us front-liners a real lift. The beautiful tributes paid to their teachers by these outstanding students were very heartwarming.

Many politicians and administrators can't see the light, but you can't fool the kids. They know—and relate their appreciation to their teachers quite openly.

So stand tall and proud! We are the driving force behind a new generation of problem-solvers.

Calvin C. Lee
Hoagland, Indiana

With unrestrained emotions I read "Tomorrow's Stars Thank Today's Teachers." I know there are not only five but thousands of teachers who are making a positive difference in students' lives. And the sad part is that those many dedicated teachers may never know what a significant impact they have. Their students may not be tomorrow's stars, but they may be well adjusted, contributing citizens of our society.

I had the exciting and humbling experience of receiving positive notes and letters from former students, parents of students, colleagues, administrators, and my own former teachers this past year after being named Kansas Teacher of the Year.

So, to teachers who work each day to meet your students' needs, I say keep it up, and remember you *are* making a difference.

Betty Amos
Colby, Kansas

Judy Blume . . .

I enjoyed your October feature on Judy Blume. She's a terrific author.

Her characters are so real that children can readily identify with them. Her books let children see that even the worst problems can be worked out. They may not have a fairy tale ending, but they're not as insurmountable as they seem.

Thanks for introducing Judy Blume to teachers who may not know of her.

Karen Jones
Hinton, West Virginia

. . . and Libraries

Let the censors beware! Your interview with Judy Blume reveals an intelligent, caring and loving author who fights the censors through appearances before small and large groups, through the media, and even financially through her sponsorship of parent discussion groups.

President Reagan's recent remark that he "attended six elementary schools and one high school, and in none of them was there a library" is certainly one solution to the censorship issue. Limit the access to a variety of materials, and one eliminates any controversy about those materials. Why didn't we think of this before?

Perhaps because we know how school libraries help students develop learning skills for a lifetime, how school librarians work with teachers to develop curriculum, how school libraries prepare students for this technological world. Sorry, Mr. President, what was good enough for you is not good enough for us.

With Judy Blume on our side you haven't got a chance!

Al Saley
Mountain Lakes, New Jersey

Would you focus on libraries, librarians, and media specialists more often? I know other librarians would like to read about their peers.

Librarians must remain a viable and visible source in education, in spite of the low profile we encounter from school boards and administrators.

Dorothy Goldsmith
Laguna Hills, California

Classroom Clothes

Re your October debate: Yes, teachers should dress for success.

As a kindergarten teacher, my day can consist of putting up or taking down bulletin boards, leading calisthenics, fingerpainting, sitting on the floor to read, jumping rope, cleaning eraser cloths, sawing and hammering, cooking, dissecting a frog or something else. I do it all in a dress or skirt and blouse, hose, comfortable shoes—and even a girdle.

I'm comfortable, look the part of a professional, and (most important) *feel* like a professional!

Christina P. Hess
Erie, Pennsylvania

Don't Blame Tenure

I caution the "true professionals" on your October letters page to think again before they blame the protections of tenure and seniority for their "inept and unqualified" colleagues.

Someone, after all, had to hire these losers and decide to retain them in spite of their ineptitude and lack of qualifications. Now that these incompetents do have tenure, we ought to bear with them as long as possible.

Tenure does offer protection to the weak teacher; it also protects the strong teacher from the injustices of whimsical school boards and arbitrary administration. School systems have always been more apt to fire "insubordinate" teachers than teachers who perform indifferently in the classroom but who do as they're told.

John Schuh
APO New York

Why Give Grades?

Why must we teachers take on the task of assigning student grades? Why shouldn't we teach and leave testing and grading up to the school district, state, or federal government?

We, the teachers, of course would use diagnostic tests to see how our students were progressing and to inform parents of progress or lack of it. However, the final test and grade would come from an outside source, via a standardized test to check student competence in the subject.

Such a system would do away with the PSAT, SAT, and any other such general test. All colleges could instantly recognize the students who could be successful on their campuses.

Freed from the pressure of giving grades, teachers could *teach*.

Students and teachers would be on the same side, since the objective of both would be for the student to pass the final test.

David C. Hendren
Lincoln City, Indiana

Teacher Turns Custodian

In the fall of 1983, I left teaching, but stayed at school: I became a maintenance worker at the elementary school where I'd taught fourth grade for six years.

After a year on the new job, I'm healthier—I've lost weight, I sleep better, my nerves are steadier. I come home with enough energy to do something besides eat supper and go to sleep. My wife's noticed the difference; she says I used to eat my food in about 5 minutes. She wouldn't want me to go back to teaching.

I always liked doing things with my hands. Now I work on the school heating systems or the grounds, remodel, do plumbing and electrical work, pour cement, build basketball courts. I'm indoors part of the time and outdoors the rest.

I get a little less pay than I did my last year in teaching, but if I'd started out in maintenance work when I started teaching, I'd be making more today than I would in teaching. In maintenance, the more experience you have, the better off you are, but in teaching if you have experience they don't want you.

When I left teaching, some of my colleagues said they wished they had the courage to do the same kind of thing; others just said "good luck." But I think any teacher could benefit from at least changing grades every few years or taking a year's leave to do something different.

Gerry Ready
Laurel, Montana

Working Teenagers

Your May debate on whether or not teenagers should juggle school and a job hit a raw nerve with me. I hope that someone finally realizes the harm this "work experience" has done to our youth.

Administrators here have allowed students to arrange their academic lives so that, if possible, when they become seniors they're enrolled in no more than four classes. They then go to work at 11:30 a.m.

This week, for the umpteenth time, an absent student came back with a note saying "please excuse, my employer wanted me to work all day." Our work experience coordinator does not condone this practice, but he did schedule a student to miss class for an entire week so she could "learn more about her job."

One parent even threatened me physically when I complained to his son about missing class. The parent said the boy had a car to pay for and I shouldn't jeopardize his job.

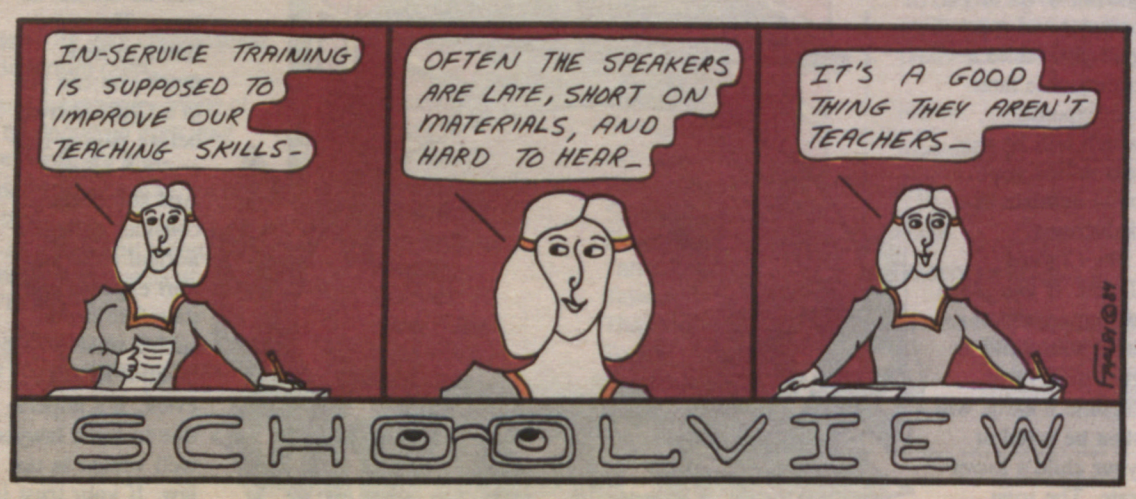
There are a limited number of students who are terminally educated by high schools. For them, work experience is excellent. But college-bound children should be urged to take every class we can offer them.

William Simmons
Paradise, California

Many students start out working part-time but soon are actually full-time. While working can contribute to some students' maturity and sense of responsibility, the ingredient your debater Peggy Dotson mentioned—"someone in authority providing continuing guidance and direction"—is often missing.

In effect, parents override the concerned work coordinator's influence regarding work hours. It's not unusual for students to work from after school until "closing," often 1 a.m. or later. School work does suffer under these conditions.

Mimi Jo Butler
Kennesaw, Georgia
El Paso, Arkansas


IN-SERVICE TRAINING IS SUPPOSED TO IMPROVE OUR TEACHING SKILLS-
OFTEN THE SPEAKERS ARE LATE, SHORT ON MATERIALS, AND HARD TO HEAR-
IT'S A GOOD THING THEY AREN'T TEACHERS-
SCHOOLVIEW

What's *your* opinion? NEA members are cordially invited to use this page to exchange ideas with their colleagues around the nation. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. Address correspondence to "Letters," NEA Today, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Debate

Should we replace basal readers with 'real books'?

Gordon Kuster

YES

Fredrick R. Burton uses children's literature to teach reading to third and fourth graders in the Informal Alternative Program at Barrington Elementary School, Upper Arlington, Ohio. An elementary teacher for four years, this Upper Arlington Education Associaton member has also taught college students. Burton spends his spare time working toward a doctorate in children's literature, reading-language arts, and curriculum.

We are a nation of people who know how to read but choose not to. Statistics show that just 10 percent of Americans account for 80 percent of the books read in this country each year—and *50 percent* of adult Americans have never read a book all the way through.

Should we be surprised? Can we really expect children to grow into adult readers when conventional school programs define reading as a blank to fill in, a box to color, and a list of questions to answer at the end of a passage?

I teach in an alternative elementary program that has used children's literature—rather than basal readers—to teach reading for the past 12 years. I've also taught college students to read by using literature. The results are the same: once the power of 'real' stories grabs the students, their fluency in reading grows.

Every day I read aloud to my third and fourth graders from children's books. My selections range from satire to fantasy to realism. And every day I set aside sustained silent reading periods when my students choose their own books to read.

By this exposure to quality literature and the opportunity to interpret readings through classroom discussions, my students become readers. They develop their own strategies—a term I prefer over 'skills'—for reading compehension.

Most important, they learn that reading involves real books. (Youngsters in basal reading programs often conclude that reading means completing a series of tasks in order to get a good grade.)

Reading instruction, as I see it, should be happening across the curriculum. Therefore, my students also write, draw, present plays, solve mathematical problems, and perform scientific experiments based on what they read.

Classrooms should make available to children many books of all kinds—and real reasons to read, such as enjoying stories or gathering information. Each classroom in my school's alternative program has several hundred books on its shelves for students to read to themselves or to each other.

Why aren't most reading programs based on children's literature? Tradition, mainly. For several decades youngsters have learned to read by progressing through a series of skills programs. These programs originated at a time when educators applied the assembly-line techniques of industry to the classroom.

Indeed, we still use the industrial metaphor today. We tend to view reading as a technology comprising hundreds of skills, all of which appear on "scope and sequence" charts. And children—like assembly-line products—*go through* a program. Similarly, children entering school in midyear are *plugged into* a program.

Am I suggesting that to teach reading by using children's literature involves *no* skills? Of course not. But every year thousands of children enter school already knowing how to read without ever having been exposed to diphthongs, digraphs, or the schwa. They've acquired their skills through such limited experiences as deciphering cereal boxes, signs, and newspaper headlines. Recent research on beginning and early readers can help us rethink our notions of skills.

Today, more than ever before, quality books for children are available in every category. By using these books—instead of basal readers with canned stories, prescribed words, and predictable exercises—to teach children how to read, we can begin to cultivate a nation of people who *enjoy* reading. To do less is to rob our children of their literary heritage.

Greg Jones

NO

Frances Shumake, reading specialist for second through seventh graders at Dunaire Elementary School in DeKalb County, Ga., has taught reading for the past 15 years. She serves on the governing board of the Georgia Association of Educators and has been a member of the NEA Congressional Contact Team and a delegate to several NEA Representative Assemblies. Other than reading, Shumake's interests are politics, traveling, and music.

During the last few years, basal readers have changed considerably. As a result, many of the criticisms leveled at them are no longer valid.

For instance, recently published reading programs have multiethnic characters and a variety of environmental settings. Sex-role stereotyping—once prevalent—is no longer the norm. Readers offer a wider and wider variety of subject matter. Photographs and drawings are more varied, and even the use of print is more innovative.

But my reasons for preferring basal reading programs over 'real books' are more fundamental: these programs follow a pattern designed to increase a student's reading skills step by step. And they include materials that work with the reading text to help the student master those skills. For example:

► *Readiness materials.* Reading programs assume that beginning students have certain knowledge and vocabulary levels. When this is not the case, readiness materials help youngsters catch up. The materials also help prepare children for reading by providing exercises that improve their abilities to distinguish letter sounds and shapes.

► *Structured teaching of skills.* Skill-training activities such as decoding—in which youngsters break new words into prefixes, syllables, endings, and vowel and consonant sounds to learn about their parts—are stepping stones to reading 'real books.' Authors of recent programs have heeded the advice of teachers and researchers and have put more emphasis than ever before on decoding skills.

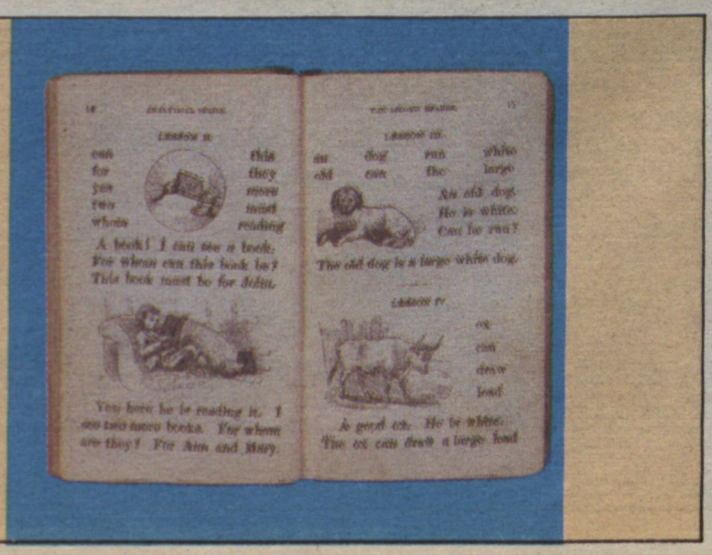
► *Controlled vocabulary.* Basal reading programs introduce vocabulary gradually and usually include words that research shows children frequently use. Any new, unfamiliar words appear many times in a story to ensure that students will master them. Standards are higher: we expect today's students to decode more words by the end of their first reader than students of a decade ago. Language structure, often ignored in the past, is now an important element. Authors use a variety of syntax.

► *Teacher manuals.* Manuals contain many suggestions for using program materials—and are especially helpful to the beginning teacher. The use of prepared material saves teachers considerable time, no small thing in these days of increasing responsibilities. Experienced teachers can select suggestions based on the needs of their students. The manuals also suggest exciting follow-up activities—like dramatization, puppetry, and choral speaking—to stories in the program. Some manuals even provide step-by-step directions.

► *Diagnosis and evaluation.* Good instruction relies on assessing students by a variety of methods at regular intervals. Most basal reading programs provide an assortment of pretests and posttests for evaluating students' skills and mastery of the material. These tests also are helpful in placing new students within a program.

In addition to all the teaching materials, most of today's basal reading programs come with a wide variety of supplementary materials, such as charts, posters, filmstrips, records, tapes, and games. Using these materials adds interest and variety to the classroom.

Controversies over the teaching of reading are likely to remain with us. But the basal program has been proven effective, and I see its successes daily. If 'real books' have their place in the beginning reading curriculum, it is only as supplementary material to the basal program.



Preparing a nation of readers, circa 1866. Two pages from* Analytical Second Reader *by Richard Edwards and J. Russell Webb, published by Taintor Brothers, Merrill & Co., New York.

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